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OFFICIAL REPORT
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, September 26, 2018

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, September 26, 2018

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

● (1400)

[*English*]

The Speaker: We will now have the singing of *O Canada*, led by the hon. member for Edmonton Centre.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, five years have passed since 47 people were killed in Lac-Mégantic, but rail transportation is no safer now than it was then.

Ever since the Conservatives were in power, Ottawa has allowed transportation companies to regulate themselves, and the Liberals have been content with that state of affairs. Companies are making all the decisions, not government.

They decide what constitutes wear, they inspect the rails, they decide what to transport through communities, and they decide how fast their cars go and how much weight they carry. They can do whatever they want. As a result, there have been not fewer accidents since the Lac-Mégantic tragedy, but more. Ottawa is to blame because it is ignoring its responsibilities.

That is why the Bloc Québécois is calling for an inquiry into the serious problems with rail transportation regulation.

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CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

Mr. Shaun Chen (Scarborough North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to pay tribute to the brave men and women who protect our country.

Members of the Canadian Armed Forces risk their lives to save the lives of strangers. They are willing to make sacrifices to make the world a safer place.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, last month I was privileged to spend five days travelling from St. John's to Iqaluit on board the HMCS *Charlottetown* as part of the Canadian leaders at sea program. Amidst waters rough and still, I experienced demonstrations and training exercises alongside Canada's amazingly brave, competent and dedicated sailors. These experiences and these moments made me realize the level of commitment, effort and tenacity it takes to serve in our Royal Canadian Navy.

I salute all the members of our Canadian Armed Forces and thank them for all they do for our home and native land.

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EDGAR CORBIERE

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the life of Edgar Corbiere, who passed away in April. He turned his family's personal struggle into an enduring legacy of compassion and support for others. This summer marked the 20th annual Haying in the 30s event, which has supported more than 5,000 people in the Lakeland region in their fight against cancer.

A core board and a group of 300 volunteers work all year round to put on a free two-day re-enactment of rural life and hay harvesting in the 1930s. Thousands of Albertans make it their annual family trip. Every penny donated there and by others is given to cancer patients and their families for medical bills, travel and parking costs, and other expenses not covered by insurance. Haying in the 30s currently supports 40 people a month.

My thanks go to Edgar for his labour of love and selflessness. I am so proud to represent families like his and communities like Mallaig that reflect the very best of what it is to be Canadian.

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● (1405)

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, looking back on the summer, it is clear that our government is delivering for the people of Cloverdale—Langley City. We are investing in families. The enhanced, tax-free Canada child benefit means more money for over 12,000 families in my communities, making things like school supplies and sports more affordable for kids.

We are investing in transit. Three billion dollars in federal and provincial funding will shorten commute times for people in my communities and ensure that residents get to spend more time at home and not stuck in traffic.

We are tackling gun and gang violence, which continues to affect my region. The Prime Minister, the Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction, and the Minister of National Defence all visited my riding recently to discuss how we tackle this persistent issue and make our communities safer for everyone.

I am proud of the work we do for the people of Cloverdale—Langley City as a part of a government delivering on its commitments to Canadians.

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CONTRACEPTIVES

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today, World Contraception Day, falls in the middle of Gender Equality Week. Sadly, in Canada, we have neither equal access to birth control nor gender equality. For example, birth control like the NuvaRing is available on public formularies in Quebec, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, PEI and the Yukon, but not in B.C., Alberta, Manitoba or Ontario. Only Alberta covers emergency contraceptives, and only Quebec covers the contraceptive patch.

Canada has an obligation to ensure that everyone across the country has access to the highest quality of medication, but obviously, this does not include many women, trans or non-binary persons in need of contraceptive care.

The Liberals are known for running with New Democrat policies to get elected and never keeping their promises. The Prime Minister could take the first concrete step and implement his promise of national pharmacare by beginning with free birth control, as proposed by my Motion 65.

He could take this—

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[*Translation*]

2018 IFAF WORLD JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Canadian junior football team on their success at the world championships in Mexico.

To shore up Team Canada's roster, the coaching staff called on two young men who happen to be former students at the École Secondaire Henri-Bourassa, or HB, in my riding, Bourassa. I myself attended that high school. Kevens Ciercius and Freud César attended the selection camps. A few weeks before the championships, they were referred to the manager to join the Canadian team. They came home with the gold.

Congratulations to the Canadian football team. I commend the efforts of those two young men, who are a credit to their alma mater, their coach, their parents and our entire northern Montreal community. Congratulations.

[*English*]

FALL FAIRS

Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, autumn has arrived and in many rural areas of the country, particularly in Ontario, that means it is fair season. These fairs are an opportunity for people from cities, towns and country to celebrate fall together, mindful of the incredible work our farming communities do to provide a safe, reliable and abundant food supply. A community celebration of a bountiful harvest was the original intent of fall fairs. However, over 160 plus years, in many southern Ontario communities, they have grown to be much more

In my constituency of Flamborough—Glanbrook, we have already had two fall fairs I have had the pleasure of attending, in Binbrook and Ancaster, and the world's fair in Rockton is about to come on Thanksgiving weekend.

All these fairs are organized by the local agricultural societies. It takes thousands of hours of volunteer effort and fundraising throughout the year and an incredible amount of organization. I thank all those who are so selfless in volunteering for the sake of their community's betterment. See you at the fair, Mr. Speaker.

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REESE FALLON

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are words to describe the shooting on the Danforth, but those words cannot adequately convey the deep sense of loss felt by those affected. Reese Fallon was an active member of our Beaches—East York Young Liberals. She came with us to the Halifax policy convention, which she was so excited for, and she helped us make a positive impact every step of the way.

Reese was smart, caring, funny and passionate. Her parents called her sassy. She was out to make the world a better place. Her friends certainly looked up to her. Few people, at any age, so fully grasp that important sense of public service, be it through her political activism or her dedication to nursing. Reese will be sorely missed by so many.

To Doug, Claudine, Riley, Quinn and all of Reese's family and friends, our city, our community and our country all mourn with you and will continue to be here for you.

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● (1410)

[*Translation*]

TORNADOS IN GATINEAU AND OTTAWA

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was shaken by the terrifying tornado that hit Gatineau and Ottawa last Friday. It tore apart thousands of buildings, and hundreds of people have been affected by the damage.

No community, anywhere in the country, is immune from extreme weather events these days, and I do not think there is any doubt that changes to our planet's climate are responsible.

Beyond the initial shock, the many people affected and the extent of the damage have met with reactions of compassion and support.

To those affected by the tornado, I want to say, on behalf of Canadians, that you are not alone. We are moved by your ordeal, we share your pain, and we will stand with you and do what is necessary to help restore your dignity and your pride in being Canadian.

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[*English*]

DUFFERIN—CALEDON

Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, three cultural organizations in my riding are each celebrating 25 years next month. Theatre Orangeville is one of Ontario's best local theatre companies. Under artistic director David Nairn, its commitment to the community is legendary, offering diverse productions and programs for those with developmental disabilities through its partnership with Community Living Dufferin.

The Museum of Dufferin just had a grand re-opening after significant renovations. Showcasing the history of Dufferin County's pioneers, the Museum of Dufferin is also dedicated to connecting with our youth to make history a living part of the community.

In The Hills magazine highlights country living in the Headwaters region. This independent, locally owned publication focuses on telling stories about our region's cultural highlights, making it a must-read for locals and visitors alike.

To honour their 25th, Theatre Orangeville, In The Hills and the Museum of Dufferin are recognizing 25 amazing Headwaters youth under age 25 who will be our future.

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VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, three weeks ago I joined Interim Place for its Annual Steps to End Violence Against Women Walk. With each step, I thought about the countless victims killed by their male partners across Canada. I thought about the five women in Peel region who lost their lives just this year, including my residents Baljit Thandi and Avtar Kaur. My community refuses to stand idly by and see another name added to this ever-growing list. We must commit to providing support and protection for these women who so desperately need it. Brampton urgently needs capacity improvements at our shelters so that women and their children affected by violence can have a reliable and secure place to go.

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AUTISM

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Temple Grandin, an individual with autism and an advocate for those on the spectrum, once said, "I am different, not less."

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge two remarkable women in my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge, Ellen Contardi and Loredana Presutto, who desire to make a difference for children with autism and their families. Like Temple Grandin, they believe that, "There needs to be a lot more emphasis on what a child can do instead of what he cannot do." In just three short years, Waves of Changes for Autism has raised community awareness and provided much-needed financial resources to families.

[*Translation*]

Tomorrow evening, I will join more than 1,000 guests at the third annual Waves of Changes for Autism gala. Today is also Gender Equality Week.

I urge my colleagues to join me in thanking Ellen and Loredana for their vision to help children on the spectrum achieve their full potential.

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[*English*]

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Malayalee people of Kerala have demonstrated their resilience and fortitude once again in the face of devastating floods and landslides. Since the onset of the monsoon season in June, more than 200 people have lost their lives as rescuers have battled overwhelming flood waters to prevent further loss of life. Thousands are still living in relief camps across the region after being displaced from their homes and losing everything they owned. The people of Kerala need our help.

The Conservative Party is committed to working with the 150,000 Malayalee Canadians who have made Canada their new home and have come together to raise funds to support flood relief efforts. Our leader demonstrated this commitment when he attended the Nehru Trophy Boat Race Society fundraiser this past summer to provide relief through medicine and food supplies for the most vulnerable victims of this crisis.

Conservatives will always stand with communities around the world who are affected by devastation and natural disasters, and we remain committed to rising to the occasion where relief and support is required. That is the Canadian way.

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● (1415)

IRELAND

Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to again recognize the important relationship between Ireland and Canada. Over the last two years, this valuable connection has been celebrated and nurtured by our political leaders, including prime ministers, ministers, MPs and TDs.

Canada and Ireland enjoy strong commercial relations. In 2016 alone, there was over $2.4 billion in two-way trade. While we continue to build strong economic ties, we also honour our distinguished Irish heritage. This past June, with the incredible support of the Embassy of Ireland, we held the first-ever Irish Day on the Hill. We brought together Canadians of Irish descent from across the country, and business and cultural leaders to celebrate our special bond. It was a phenomenal evening.

This week, we welcome another group of TDs to Ottawa, including the chair of the Canada-Ireland Interparliamentary Friendship Group. As they meet with MPs to discuss trade opportunities and other ways to enhance our friendship, I would like to say a warm *fáilte* to Canada.

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EDUCATION

Ms. Georgina Jolibois (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, many teachers and support staff at schools across Canada returned to work this past month looking to inspire and educate future generations of Canadians. In northern Saskatchewan, though, many schools are struggling with day-to-day operations, as there is a significant staff shortage. In Sandy Bay, Saskatchewan, Principal Randy Mallory has stretched his staff to their limits, as some teachers are doing double their workload and resource staff are now teaching classes instead of focusing on individual students who need help. Not only does morale suffer when teachers are overworked, but students and communities suffer too. It is our responsibility, as elected officials, to support future generations. However, governments are choosing not to invest in education and in youth in the north. On behalf of my constituents, I call on all governments to invest in northern education programs and northern youth.

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CANADIAN FORCES

Hon. Rob Nicholson (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to rise in the House today as the newly appointed shadow minister for public services and procurement. As such, it provides me the opportunity to address some of the serious procurement issues currently facing the amazing men and women of our Armed Forces.

For example, the Liberals are replacing our 40-year-old fighter jets with 40-year-old ones from Australia. It brings back memories of the leaky subs they bought from Britain. They have also insulted our forces by asking them to return their smelly old sleeping bags so they can be redistributed to new recruits, in an effort to compensate for their costly military spending. Spending millions on a fleet of lemons is an extension of a summer of failure by the Liberals. We simply cannot trust them to do the right thing and equip our troops with the necessary resources.

I call upon the Liberals to show a little respect for the members of our Canadian Armed Forces beginning with the purchase of new sleeping bags. How about that for a start?

ORANGE SHIRT DAY

Mr. Michael McLeod (Northwest Territories, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this Sunday, September 30, we mark the annual commemoration of Orange Shirt Day. It started in 2013 when participants wore orange to commemorate survivors and raise awareness of the tragic legacy of Indian residential schools. This day was inspired by the story of a six-year-old girl named Phyllis Webstad, whose grandmother gave her a brand new orange shirt to wear proudly for her first day at the residential school in 1973. Phyllis's shirt was taken away on that day in an attempt to break the links to her identity, family and community. We share her story so that all Canadians can better understand the legacy of residential schools.

This Sunday, I encourage everyone to wear orange and come together to remember residential school survivors and their families in the spirit of reconciliation.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*Translation*]

JUSTICE

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on April 8, 2009, Tori Stafford was walking home from school alone for the very first time, but she never made it home. She was lured away by a promise to see a puppy and was brutally raped and murdered.

We have learned that one of the people responsible for this heinous crime has been transferred to a healing lodge. Canadians were shocked to hear this news.

I want to give the Prime Minister the opportunity to tell the House whether he intends to reverse this decision.

● (1420)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our hearts go out to Tori Stafford's family for their loss.

The minister has asked the commissioner of the Correctional Service of Canada to review these kinds of decisions to ensure that they are appropriate and consistent with long-standing policy.

[*English*]

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are not looking for a review; they are looking for action. They want to see the government reverse this decision.

Will the Prime Minister do what he has the power to do and reverse this decision?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our hearts go out to the family of Tori Stafford for the loss they endured and have lived with these past nine years.

The minister has asked that the commissioner of correctional services review such decisions to ensure they are done properly and in accordance with long-standing policy.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is not what the minister said. The minister said that he trusted the officials to ensure that the killers' bad practices were addressed. These were not bad practices; they were horrific crimes and they deserve to be punished.

The Prime Minister has the ability to reverse this decision. Will he do so?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as mentioned by the then minister of correctional services and public safety, the member for Lévis—Bellechasse, "I", the minister, "do not control the security classification of individual prisoners". That is what the Conservative minister said in 2013.

We continue to respect our justice system to take the right decisions in the right way. The current minister has asked to ensure that all of the decisions were taken in accordance with our laws.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when officials get it wrong, the government and elected representatives have an obligation to make it right.

The Prime Minister knows that the department reports to the government and that he has a variety of tools at his disposal. He needs to tell Canadians right now whether or not he intends to use every tool at his disposal to reverse this decision.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the individual in question was classified as a medium security risk a number of years ago and continued to be classified in 2014 when she was transferred to this new facility as medium security.

On this side of the House, we do not look to politicize tragedies like this. We expect people to do their jobs, and that is what we are ensuring will happen.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): That is the whole point, Mr. Speaker. They are not doing their job. This is not a minimum security risk. This is a convicted killer who has been found guilty of the most horrific crimes, the types of things all parents are so fearful of.

We, as elected representatives, and the Prime Minister have an obligation and a responsibility to make it right when officials get it wrong. He knows he has the power to do that. This person bragged about stomping on the face of a fellow inmate, bragging to her friends that she had committed hateful acts in prison. Will he do the right thing and reverse this decision?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will let Canadians make a determination of who is politicizing this situation.

The individual in question was transferred to a medium security facility in 2014. She is still in a medium security facility now.

[*Translation*]

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Ruth Ellen Brosseau (Berthier—Maskinongé, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Bill S-3, an act to amend the Indian Act, still contains gender-based discrimination.

The Superior Court of Quebec ordered Canada to address all exclusions based on gender, but Bill S-3 only removes certain obstacles. Gender inequality continues to exist today, in 2018.

As this is Gender Equality Week, can the Prime Minister confirm today that he will eliminate all inequalities in Bill S-3, an act to amend the Indian Act?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week we are celebrating Gender Equality Week. We know that we still have a lot of work to do to achieve equality in many areas. We continue to work in partnership with indigenous peoples on reconciliation, equality and ending marginalization. We will continue to work on and apply different approaches to the problems of inequality between men and women in Canada. We have made great progress, but we still have work to do.

● (1425)

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Dr. Lynn Gehl is an outspoken advocate for removing sex-based discrimination in the Indian Act, and was herself impacted by an unstated paternity policy that still remains today. Dr. Gehl went to court to win her battle against a hierarchy that should not even exist.

It is 2018. Courts ruled that the federal government needs to remove all discriminatory clauses in the act, and that charter rights must be respected. The Indian Act still discriminates against women.

When will the Liberal government do something about it?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, sex-based equity is a fundamental human right. The recent incorrect media reports containing inflated unstated paternity numbers have now been corrected.

Bill S-3 eliminated all sex-based discrimination from the Indian Act registration provisions, including enshrining additional procedural protections for unstated paternity. We recognize that there are a number of flaws within the Indian Act. That is why we have committed to work with indigenous peoples across this country to move forward beyond the Indian Act. We look forward to that path toward reconciliation with them over the years and decades to come.

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this summer, I visited Red Sucker Lake, the home of the late Elijah Harper, an isolated community northeast of Winnipeg, where I met Rhonda. We talked about her two beautiful kids. We talked about being moms.

As I was leaving, she told me how happy she was it was summertime because she could stay in her house, a house that was covered partially by a tarp and without a bathroom, in Canada, in 2018.

My question is to the Prime Minister. Why is his government failing first nations people like Rhonda and so many first nations women across this country, failing to act on the housing crisis that exists in Canada today?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we recognize the need for all Canadians, particularly indigenous Canadians, to have safe, affordable housing. The situation is one that we have moved forward to correcting. In our first years in government, we moved forward with $8.6 billion toward indigenous communities, particularly housing, among other things. We recognize there are still significant needs, which is why we have moved forward with a $40-billion national housing strategy that will have many different aspects and components. We will ensure that more Canadians have affordable and safe places to live.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, indigenous peoples in remote communities are living in third-world conditions. The story that my colleague from Churchill—Keewatinook Aski told is shocking. A mother with two children to look after is living in a house with no bathroom and practically no roof. That is unacceptable in 2018. The Liberals must hear just as many stories like this as we do.

How can they ignore the housing crisis in indigenous communities? When will they implement a targeted strategy?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no government has taken the commitment to reconciliation and investments for indigenous peoples as seriously as we do. We are making great headway when it comes to building new housing, opening new schools and setting up new health care centres. We know that there is still a lot of work to be done. We have made real investments across the country, which have had a significant impact on various communities. We will continue to work with indigenous peoples to ensure that families like the one just mentioned are treated fairly, given every opportunity and, most importantly, kept safe.

* * *

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Terri-Lynne McClintic was found guilty of first-degree murder and rape and torture of eight-year-old Tori Stafford. She was sentenced to life in prison. Eight years into her prison sentence, she is being moved to a healing facility. This is a bad decision by officials. On any calculus, this is a bad decision. When bad decisions were shown to us as a government, we intervened. We stopped rapist and murderer Paul Bernardo from receiving conjugal visits. We blocked child killer Clifford Olson from receiving pension benefits.

When confronted with bad decisions, a good government acts. Why is this Prime Minister not acting?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the previous government, in 2014, transferred this individual to a medium-security facility. She is still in a medium-security facility now. The level to which the member opposite is playing politics with a terrible tragedy is yet again an example of the depths to which the members opposite continue to stoop.

● (1430)

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when the government members applaud, the way they do, that incredibly despicable answer, what they are applauding is the victim not getting her justice. Today we speak here for Tori Stafford. Canadians understand—

The Speaker: Order. We need to hear the question and of course the answer after that. Order.

The hon. member for Milton.

Hon. Lisa Raitt: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, the difficulty with a government receiving a bad decision is that the decision has to be made then to act. We acted every single time we found out that a bad decision that infuriates Canadians was made. This is a terrible decision. It is despicable. Why are the government and the Prime Minister not acting?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I apologize for the noise from my backbench.

The member opposite was part of a government that in 2014 transferred this individual to a medium-security facility. That individual is still in a medium-security facility. These are the political games the members opposite are choosing to play.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness referred to the crimes committed by Terri-Lynne McClintic as "bad practices". What she did was not bad practices. It was a despicable crime. She was convicted of the heinous murder of an eight-year-old child, yet the minister agreed to transfer her to a healing lodge. That is simply preposterous. The Prime Minister has the power to reverse this decision.

Why does he not send her back to a maximum-security facility?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is yet another question on the same issue. The previous Conservative government transferred this individual to a medium-security prison in 2014. She is still in a medium-security facility now.

The level of political game-playing we are seeing right now is disturbing.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is disturbing is the answer Canadians are getting from the Prime Minister.

We are talking about the kidnapping, rape and murder of an eight-year-old girl, yet all we hear from the Prime Minister is that he is asking for a review of the decision. This was a heinous murder, and a bad decision was made. The Prime Minister has the power to change it.

Why is he not reversing this decision and sending this murderer back to a maximum-security prison?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we live under the rule of law. Politicians do not get to make decisions in regard to the justice system. We respect the system.

I will repeat once more that this individual was transferred in 2014. She remains in a facility with the same security level.

[*English*]

Hon. Tony Clement (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to state for the record that the only political games being played in this House today are the word games being conducted by the Prime Minister of Canada on this very important issue. Terri-Lynne McClintic helped lure Tori, hit Tori three times in the head with a claw hammer; she was a look-out while Tori was raped and then helped place Tori's body in a garbage bag. The Prime Minister knows full well that he has the power and authority to change this case in an instant. Why will he not use his power and authority right now to do the right thing for Tori's family and the right thing for society?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I hope Canadians pay attention to that question and this answer.

In 2014, the individual was transferred to a medium-security facility under the previous government. The individual is still in a medium-security facility today.

That question needs to be noticed by Canadians and that behaviour needs to be noticed by Canadians.

● (1435)

Hon. Tony Clement (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the facility does not even have a fence, but it does have cooking classes.

The fact of the matter is that the Minister of Public Safety characterized the killer's conduct as "bad practices".

When is the Prime Minister going to do the right thing, admonish his minister, do the right thing for people who care about justice in our society and make sure that the killer is put right back behind bars?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the things we see in politics these days is a level of polarization, a level of populism, that is creeping into our discourse.

On this side of the House we choose to anchor our decisions in fact, in the rule of law and in due process. This is what we will continue to do.

The individual was transferred under the previous government to a medium-security facility. She is still in a medium-security facility.

Oral Questions

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' exploitation of this little girl's death is sickening.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith has the floor.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Mr. Speaker, Gender Equality Week is meant to celebrate the work of feminist organizations, but many of them are struggling with a lack of funding and have closed their doors because they cannot help the women in need.

They unquestionably improve the lives of women, but they are the most underfunded in Canada's non-profit sector. They need reliable, long-term and stable operational funding.

When will the Prime Minister walk his talk and dedicate the much-needed core funding that feminist organizations need to do their work?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member opposite that women's organizations across this country do extraordinary work, important work that is good for our society and also good for economic growth and everyone's opportunities. That is why we recognize them.

We are moving forward with $100 million in sustainable funding for community organizations. There is always more need, but we are happy to be supporting to a greater degree the great work being done right across the country.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Salaberry—Suroît, NDP): Mr. Speaker, half of all women in this country will experience physical or sexual violence at some point in their lives.

Whether in their homes, on campus or in the workplace, women have to live with the threat of harassment and violence. A number of labour organizations, including the Canadian Labour Congress, are calling for a plan and immediate action such as an awareness campaign and better long-term funding for women's organizations.

Instead of launching endless consultations, when will the Prime Minister finally take action to put an end to violence against women?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we agree, so we are taking action. We are investing $100 million to increase funding to organizations that support women, and we know that we need to do more. We know that the #MeToo movement must continue. We need to combat harassment and intimidation. We will do our part. We need to change society for the better, and that is beginning to happen, slowly but surely.

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Mr. Dave MacKenzie (Oxford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 8, 2009, Tori Stafford left her school to go home. She never arrived there.

When Tori's body was found, it was naked from the waist down. The autopsy revealed that she had suffered beatings that caused lacerations to her liver and broken ribs, and that her death was as a result of repeated blows to her head with a claw hammer.

Her killer Terri-Lynne McClintic has been moved to a healing lodge.

The Prime Minister has the power to reverse this decision today. Will he stand with the family and ensure that this child murderer stays behind bars?

● (1440)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is the 12th consecutive question from the Conservatives on this issue, and that is their choice. However, I would ask them to please not continue to increase the level of graphic detail read into the official record here. This is not something we want to politicize this way. This is not the way the House should be engaging.

I continue to welcome questions on any matters that matter, but I ask them to please maybe not read the words on the pages in front of them.

The Speaker: Order, please. Members from time to time hear things they do not like in here and that is probably going to continue. However, I would ask them to wait their turn to speak, which will come eventually, and to not interrupt.

The hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Tori Stafford never came home because Terri-Lynne McClintic, who Tori thought was a friend, lured her to her. McClintic plead guilty to first degree murder and was sentenced to life in prison.

The minister's defence of releasing this murderer after only six years behind bars to spend the remains of her sentence in a healing lodge is unconscionable.

The Prime Minister has the right and the power to change this decision. Will he or will he not?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, words are important and the member opposite used the word released in her question. The fact is that the individual in question who committed a terrible crime was transferred in 2014 to a medium-security facility and remains in a medium-security facility today.

Anything else the members opposite are asking is fair game, but will they please stick to the facts in this terrible tragedy.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, to my way of thinking, a bad practice is texting while driving. We are talking about a rape, a kidnapping and a murder—a vicious murder.

My question for the Prime Minister is very simple. It took him two weeks to appoint the ombudsman for offenders, but one year to appoint the federal ombudsman for victims of crime.

When will the Prime Minister put victims ahead of criminals and condemn the unfortunate remarks made by the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness about a despicable crime?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Public Safety has asked for a review to ensure that all procedures, laws and rules were followed in the processing of this criminal.

We will continue to ensure that all rules are followed to the letter. Our country is governed by the rule of law, and I believe it is important to acknowledge that. We will continue to ensure that victims receive justice and that the appropriate penalties are administered by our system.

[*English*]

Mr. David Anderson (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, McClintic admitted to kidnapping eight-year-old Tori so she could be raped, tortured, murdered and buried in a field. There is no more disgusting crime a person can commit.

The Liberals are now defending her transfer from a prison in Ontario straight to the Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge in my riding. This facility does not even have a fence around it. It is not intended for child murderers. As a matter of fact, there are often children in the facility.

The Prime Minister has the power to reverse this decision today. Will he do that?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am going to keep this as simple as I possibly can, because there is a lot of rhetoric, a lot of fear and a lot of politics in that question.

The individual in question was transferred to a medium-security facility in 2014 under the Conservative government. She is currently in what is classified as a medium-security facility.

The Conservatives are playing politics in an extremely troubling way.

* * *

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Anova in London, Ontario provides full service support for survivors of gender-based violence. The previous minister for Status of Women held consultations to discuss a national strategy to address gender-based violence.

This year, 71 people in Canada died at the hands of their intimate partners. Our criminal justice system has no legislation that specifically addresses intimate partner violence. This is outrageous.

Anova has yet to hear back from the minister. Where is the plan? How long does it take? Lives depend on it.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for her advocacy on this extremely important issue.

Canada will only reach its full potential when everyone has the opportunity to thrive, no matter who they are or where they come from. To achieve this, we need to work together to prevent gender-based violence. That is why we are investing nearly $200 million in the first-ever federal strategy to prevent and address gender-based violence that will work to prevent gender-based violence, support survivors and their families, and promote a responsive, legal and just system.

* * *

● (1445)

HOUSING

Ms. Sheri Benson (Saskatoon West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I recently met with the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters and was moved to hear about its struggles to provide safe refuge for all women and children free from abuse. The shelters are full. The lack of affordable housing is making a terrible situation worse.

These shelters are doing everything they can to keep women and children safe. No one should be forced to live on the street or risk her family's safety for a place to call home.

Why is the government waiting to ensure all Canadians have a safe, affordable home?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we agree with the member opposite. Women and girls facing violence need a safe place to turn.

We are investing $40 billion in a national housing strategy, which dedicates 25% of the funds to projects for women, girls and their families fleeing violence. This means at least 7,000 spaces maintained or built for survivors of family violence and the creation of five additional shelters in first nations communities.

We will continue to improve the lives of those in the greatest need, grow the middle class and make Canada an even better place to call home.

* * *

[*Translation*]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government knows that sound public investments in science, research and innovation will help our agricultural industry remain prosperous and sustainable.

Could the Prime Minister give the House an update on the government's investments in agricultural science?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Châteauguay—Lacolle for her question.

Recently, our government was proud to announce the details of a $70-million investment that will help us to address environmental challenges and hire 75 new environmental scientists. This investment will help us hire the next generation of world-class researchers and will help our farmers grow their businesses in the years ahead.

We will continue to support our farmers and our researchers across the country.

* * *

[*English*]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Larry Miller (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Barry Jackson is a Korean War veteran who lives in Georgian Bluffs. He fought bravely for our country and now, at 87 years old, is looking for support. Unfortunately, Veterans Affairs has been giving Barry the runaround.

While an actual veteran fights for help, the Liberals are providing support to convicted murderer Chris Garnier who has never served a day in his life.

In 1951, Barry Jackson answered Canada's call. Will the Prime Minister today now answer his call and quite giving the resources that he earned to murderer Chris Garnier?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will take no lessons from the Conservatives on how they treated our veterans. They used them as props in photo-ops. They shuttered the service centres that were there to help them. They nickel-and-dimed the veterans at every turn.

Over the past three years, we have invested $10 billion in our veterans. We have reopened the service centres that the Conservatives shuttered. We are investing in mental health supports for veterans as well.

We will continue to work hard to make sure that those who serve our country get the fullest support and recognition they so justly deserve.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Christopher Garnier is a criminal. He is a convicted killer who has been receiving benefits from Veterans Affairs Canada when he did not serve in the Canadian Armed Forces for a single minute. Since the Liberals took office, they have been in the habit of compensating criminals. The Minister of Veterans Affairs has failed miserably at doing the right thing and has lost Canadians' confidence.

The Prime Minister is responsible for his ministers' decisions. What is he waiting for? When will he put an end to these histrionics and finally do what needs to be done?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every member of the House is grieving with Constable Campbell's family.

This is a tragic situation, and the minister has taken steps to address the policy to ensure that this does not occur moving forward. This ensures that we will continue to support veterans and their families who need our help, while maintaining the integrity of the system.

● (1450)

[*English*]

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Prime Minister and every Liberal on that side of the floor rose to defend providing veteran services to a convicted cop killer.

The Prime Minister knows in his heart that this is wrong and is an insult to our Canadian Forces members, veterans and their families.

I taught my children that no matter how deep a hole they may dug themselves into it was always all right to turn around and do the right thing.

Will the Prime Minister finally show our troops the respect they deserve, look into that camera, do not act—

The Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every member in the House is grieving with Constable Campbell's family. This is a tragic situation, and the minister has taken steps to address the policy to ensure this does not occur moving forward.

The minister has increased the level of scrutiny and the department is addressing its existing policy in relation to treatment of family members under extenuating circumstances, such as conviction of a serious crime. This ensures that we will continue to support veterans and their families that need our help, while maintaining the integrity of our system.

Mr. Phil McColeman (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me say what is shameful. It is shameful that it took 29 days for the minister and the Prime Minister to get back to the House. It is shameful that every Liberal in the House stood yesterday to defend the benefits going to Chris Garnier, a convicted murderer sitting in a penitentiary absorbing veterans benefits.

Would the Prime Minister tell the House why he thinks convicted murderer Chris Garnier is entitled to benefits meant for veterans?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is obviously a tragic situation and the minister has taken steps to address the policy to ensure this does not occur moving forward. This ensures we will continue to support veterans and their families that need our help, while maintaining the integrity of the system.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the ombudsman's latest report clearly shows that women veterans are waiting longer than men to get the financial assistance they are entitled to. They wait eight weeks longer, on average. As if that were not insulting enough, we learned that francophone women wait even longer than everyone else. In the military, there are no men, no women. There are just soldiers. All soldiers wear the same uniform.

Why do we see differences on the basis of gender or language in the services offered?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her question. I completely agree that this is a big problem that we must fix. We are committed to seeing what we can do to restore the balance and make sure that everyone is treated equally. This is unacceptable. I completely agree.

* * *

STATUS OF WOMEN

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is 2018. October is right around the corner, but Canada still trails the pack on pay equity, according to the OECD. On average, women earn less than men for equal work. Less pay means lower maternity benefits and less money in retirement. Women who lose their job also collect less employment insurance.

Will the government keep its promise to introduce a bill by the end of this year?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yes, we will be introducing a bill. We know that pay equity is essential. It is the right thing to do. We will do the right thing the right way. We will create economic growth and economic opportunity. We will ensure that all men and women have equal opportunities to succeed and receive fair pay for the work they do. That is so very important to us. That is why we will be moving forward with the bill soon.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Trans Mountain project represents 5,000 jobs and $7 billion in investments and is currently on hold. When the court rendered its decision, the Prime Minister should have appealed it, but instead welcomed yet another delay. That comes as no surprise. Let us not forget that the Prime Minister said he wants to phase out Alberta oil, and for him that cannot happen soon enough. This week, our Conservative leader presented a realistic and responsible plan for moving forward in a tangible way.

What is the Prime Minister's plan to finally get us moving forward with Trans Mountain?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the funny thing is that the Conservatives' plan for Trans Mountain smacks of Stephen Harper's way of doing things: utter contempt for the courts, utter contempt for the environment, utter contempt for consulting with indigenous peoples. When the Conservatives came to power in 2006, 99% of Albertan oil was sold to the United States. Today, a decade later, 99% of Albertan oil is still being sold to the United States. They failed to diversify. We will—

● (1455)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Lakeland.

[*English*]

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, four major pipelines were built under the Conservatives. The Conservatives have a plan to rescue the Trans Mountain expansion.

From day one, for nearly two years, the Prime Minister failed to act to get construction started. It has been 27 days since the court ruled he failed. All the Liberals have done is kick the can down the road for another six months, and he still has no plan for indigenous consultation or to stop other legal threats.

In April, he himself promised a law to build Trans Mountain but he failed to deliver. Therefore, would he commit to retroactive emergency legislation today to get the Trans Mountain expansion built?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here are the facts: When the Conservatives came into office in 2006, 99% of our oil exports went to the United States. After 10 years of inaction, 99% of Alberta's oil was still sold to the United States because their approach to get to new markets failed. They are doubling down on that approach and showing a disregard for the courts, disregard for the environment and disregard for the consultation with indigenous peoples.

That is not how to move forward in a responsible, concrete way on getting our resources—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Lakeland.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, not a single shovel has been put in the ground to start the Trans Mountain expansion. The court ruled that Kinder Morgan consulted properly. Forty-three indigenous communities want the Trans Mountain expansion. Kinder Morgan only wanted certainty and clarity, not tax dollars, but the Prime Minister failed to deliver all of that. He gave 4.5 billion Canadian tax dollars to build pipelines in the U.S.

What is worse is he is bringing in the job-killing anti-pipeline act, Bill C-69. It would stop all future private sector pipelines and kill Canadian resource development.

Will the Prime Minister stop attacking the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of Canadians and kill the anti-pipeline act, Bill C-69?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what the Conservatives continue to not understand is that their approach failed. We cannot get big projects built by marginalizing indigenous peoples and completely disregarding environmental science and communities.

We know that moving forward to provide clarity to proponents and investors while giving a path on consultations and environmental science is the way we will continue to get big things built in this country.

Canadians expect us to build an economy and an environment that go together. That is exactly what we are doing on this side of the House.

* * *

[*Translation*]

TAXATION

Mr. Ramez Ayoub (Thérèse-De Blainville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, families in Thérèse-De Blainville and across Canada got a pleasant surprise this summer when they received the Canada child benefit and got a little more tax-free money in their pockets.

This government indexed the Canada child benefit two years ahead of schedule. That means families are getting more money right now, instead of having to wait until 2020.

Could the Prime Minister tell the House how the Canada child benefit continues to help families?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Thérèse-De Blainville for highlighting the incredible impact of the Canada child benefit.

Every time the kids head back to school, we hear families across Canada tell us how important this benefit is. It means new clothes, hot meals and new books. The reason why we can do this is that we put an end to the Conservative practice of sending cheques to millionaire families. We are proud to be investing in Canadian families, because it means investing in our communities and, above all, in Canada's future.

* * *

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, 9/11 widow Maureen Basnicki appeared before the justice committee where she criticized the government's $10.5-million payout to al Qaeda terrorist Omar Khadr. Instead of showing respect toward Ms. Basnicki, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice scolded her. This is beyond shameful.

Will the Prime Minister apologize for his parliamentary secretary's disrespect toward a 9/11 widow?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we recognize that Canadians are frustrated with the out-of-court settlement that was made. I agree. We should all be frustrated with that, because no government going forward should ever think it is okay to violate the fundamental rights of anyone, regardless of how heinous his or her crime was. That is a principle Canadians can understand and hopefully governments today and in the future will heed this lesson carefully.

● (1500)

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as a mother I want to know that my children are safe when I am at work. Quality, accessible and affordable child care is a must for every working mom, yet in 2018 with a so-called feminist Prime Minister, we still do not have a national child care program. UBC's Dr. Paul Kershaw said work-life conflicts of parents raising young children cost Canadian businesses an estimated $4 billion.

If we can dump $4.5 billion into a leaky pipeline, why can we not have a national affordable child care program for all?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we agree on the need for child care. That is why we are moving forward with a $7-billion investment in child care right across the country. We recognize provincial jurisdiction in this area, but we also know that the federal government has a role to play, and that is one we are happy to play.

On top of that, we moved forward with the Canada child benefit that is putting more money in the pockets of nine out of 10 Canadian families and lifting hundreds of thousands of kids out of poverty.

This is something we will continue to work on because we recognize how investing in children's future now makes life better for families and for communities.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the opioid crisis is a national public health crisis that is devastating individuals, families and communities across this country.

At the beginning of September, the governments of Canada and British Columbia signed a bilateral agreement for innovative treatment options for people with substance use disorders. Can the Prime Minister update the House on this important agreement?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam for his tireless work in his community.

Earlier this month, we announced a bilateral agreement between our government and the Government of British Columbia. Our investment of $34 million is part of the $150 million for a cost-shared emergency treatment fund announced in budget 2018. This funding has been designated to enhance or increase access to quality treatment services for substance use disorders, including specific initiatives for youth.

We are working with the Government of British Columbia to reverse the trend of the national overdose epidemic.

* * *

JUSTICE

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Tori Stafford's father says that the decision to allow the transfer of Terri-Lynne McClintic to a facility without a fence is wrong.

Today, the Prime Minister has had over a dozen opportunities to address this question and he has not done so. This is not about the bureaucrats who serve him or previous governments or the preambles of questions that he does not like; this is about his decisions and what he will do to correct wrongs.

Once again, will the Prime Minister use the power that he has to right this wrong and reverse this decision?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to thank the New Democratic Party of Canada for choosing to make gender equity and gender opportunities the centre of their questions throughout this entire question period. I think it goes to the challenges we are all facing as a country moving forward.

Second, on the member opposite's question, the previous government transferred the individual to a medium security facility in 2014 and the individual in question is still in a medium security facility today.

* * *

[*Translation*]

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this summer was the fifth anniversary of the Lac-Mégantic tragedy that claimed the lives of 47 people, yet rail transportation is no safer now than it was then. It is even more dangerous, in fact, and that is because the federal government lets transportation companies self-regulate at the expense of public safety.

This being Rail Safety Week, will the Prime Minister heed the National Assembly's call for an inquiry into the circumstances of the Lac-Mégantic tragedy and problems with rail transportation regulation?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was in Lac-Mégantic to mark the fifth anniversary of the tragedy. With me was the Minister of Transport, who from day one one the job has pledged to improve rail safety.

We know we have a lot of work to do, and we are doing it. We never want to see another community or another family suffer because of a tragedy like the one that took place that terrible night in Lac-Mégantic.

● (1505)

[*English*]

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

The Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that Mr. Holland, member for the electoral district of Ajax, has been appointed member of the Board of Internal Economy in place of Mr. Rodriguez, member for the electoral district of Honoré-Mercier, for the purposes and under the provisions of section 50 of the Parliament of Canada Act.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, a document entitled, "Legislative Background: An Act to amend the Divorce Act, the Family Orders and Agreements Enforcement Assistance Act and the Garnishment, Attachment and Pension Diversion Act and to make consequential amendments to another Act (Bill C-78)".

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Amarjeet Sohi (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to subsection 7(2) of the Department of Natural Resources Act, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the annual report for 2018, "The State of Canada's Forests".

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 12th report of the Standing Committee on International Trade in relation to Bill C-79, the comprehensive and progressive agreement for trans-Pacific partnership implementation act. The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report it back to the House without any amendments.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, in a moment I am going to ask for unanimous consent for a motion that would help bring a fair and lasting solution for Canadian Nuclear Laboratories workers who are facing the loss of their pension. Bill C-414, would provide another year for the government to provide and find a solution in conjunction with these workers. That is why I am hopeful that if you seek it you will find unanimous consent for the following motion: That, notwithstanding any standing order or usual practices of this House, Bill C-414, an act to amend the Jobs and Economic Growth Act (Canadian Nuclear Laboratories Ltd.) be deemed to have been read a second time and referred to a committee of the whole, deemed considered in committee of the whole, deemed reported without amendment, deemed concurred in at the report stage and deemed read a third time and passed.

The Speaker: Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: No.

* * *

● (1510)

PETITIONS

FIREARMS

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition signed by Canadians from several ridings, including Markham—Stouffville, King—Vaughan, and Richmond Hill.

The petitioners call on the House of Commons to respect the rights of law-abiding firearms owners and reject the Prime Minister's plan to waste taxpayers' money studying a ban on guns which are already banned.

POSTAL BANKING

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I present a petition to the House of Commons signed by many Canadians who are concerned that nearly two million Canadians desperately need an alternative to payday lenders because of the crippling rates of interest that are charged to poor, marginalized, rural and indigenous communities.

We have 3,800 Canada Post outlets already in existence in these rural areas where there is often no bank. Canada Post has the infrastructure and can make a rapid transition to include postal banking. Therefore, the petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to enact my Motion No. 166, to create a committee to study and propose a plan for postal banking under the Canada Post Corporation.

SURVIVOR PENSION BENEFITS

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table a petition with respect to Bill C-397. Spouses of dying or past-serving veterans, public servants or employees of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police are unfairly deprived of pensions in the event that their spouse dies. The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to support Bill C-397, which would eliminate all legislation that denies surviving spouses the pensions of military members, members of Parliament, judges, employees of Crown corporations, public servants and employees of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police if the retiree entered into a spousal relationship after age 60.

NUTRITION

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table e-petition 1597, labelling of food products. In part, the petition notes that recent studies all concluded that a moderate amount, three to five grams daily, of sodium is an optimal population-wide recommendation. Below this amount, an increased risk of disease and death is seen. It goes on to note that saturated fats were condemned in the 1950s based on weak and unreliable data. The evidence since then has failed to support the diet-heart hypothesis. Limiting saturated fats may cause harm. The largest observational study to date found that low consumption of saturated fats was associated with higher rates of mortality and stroke. Finally, good science is the best way to inform good public health policy.

CANADA SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to table a petition signed by Canadians from across the country, many of those from my riding of Battlefords—Lloydminster. The petitioners assert that the Liberal government's Canada summer jobs attestation discriminates against faith-based employers and that it infringes on their constitutional rights. The petition highlights a serious concern about the precedent it sets in our country and calls on the House of Commons to oppose the discriminatory Canada summer jobs values test.

OPIOIDS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to table a petition on behalf of my constituents from Courtney, in the Comox Valley. They are calling on the government to address the opioid crisis. With over 4,000 Canadians dying in 2017 due to preventable opioid overdose and fentanyl poisoning, this is more deaths than any other public health emergency in the last 20 years, including SARS, H1N1 and Ebola. The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to declare the current opioid crisis and the fentanyl poisoning crisis a national public health emergency under the Emergencies Act; to reform drug policy to decriminalize personal possession; and to create with urgency and immediacy a system to provide safe, unadulterated access to substances so that people who use substances experimentally, recreationally or chronically are not at imminent risk of overdose due to a contaminated source. They are also calling on the government to adopt models based on the Portugal model, where they had only 40 overdose deaths in 2017.

CANADA SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure of presenting petition number 421. This petition, signed by many of my constituents, calls on the Prime Minister to defend freedom of conscience, thought and belief and to withdraw the attestation requirement for applicants to the Canada summer jobs program.

● (1515)

CONTRACEPTION

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on World Contraception Day, signatories from Gabriola and Nanaimo and Duncan urge the government to support NDP Motion No. 65, which calls on the federal government to work with the provinces to cover the cost of prescription contraceptives. Fifteen per cent of Canadians use no contraception at all; 24% of Canadians do not have access to a subsidized drug plan, meaning that they have to pay out of pocket, and this hits women harder than men; and subsidized contraceptives in the eastern U.S. and in Great Britain greatly reduce the costs of unintended pregnancy. We urge the government to follow the advice of the petitioners.

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise to present a petition from petitioners within Saanich—Gulf Islands, who are calling on the government to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to stand up for the rights of indigenous people.

[*Translation*]

MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Mr. Pierre-Luc Dusseault (Sherbrooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present the certificate for electronic petition e-1541, which has been signed by 5,662 Canadians.

The petitioners would like psychotherapy services to be exempt from sales tax like the HST. At the moment, psychotherapy services, unlike other health services, are not exempt from sales tax.

The petitioners want these services to be put on equal footing with other health services. These Canadians are therefore calling on the House of Commons to remove the HST on psychotherapy as part of an overall effort to make mental health care as accessible as possible to the citizens of Canada.

* * *

[*English*]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

ACCESSIBLE CANADA ACT

The House resumed from September 24 consideration of the motion that Bill C-81, An Act to ensure a barrier-free Canada, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, more than 5.3 million Canadians, almost 16% of the population of this country, are living with some form of disability that affects their freedom, independence or quality of life. Of that number, over 200,000 are children and youth.

One in five Canadian women live with disabilities. Women with disabilities are poorer than their male counterparts. They are three times more likely to rely on government programs than women without disabilities and more likely than men with disabilities. They are also particularly susceptible to domestic violence. The rates of violence against women living with disabilities is particularly high. They disproportionately call on women's shelters, face homelessness and are victims of violence. The rate of head injuries associated with women who are victims of domestic violence or intimate partner violence is particularly high. I really commend DAWN Canada for doing groundbreaking work in this area. We were very reliant on its advice and testimony at the status of women committee.

Here we are today hearing about Bill C-81, which is intended to help and support persons living with disabilities. The need is tremendous. Persons living with disabilities within Canada have waited over two years for this bill to be tabled. In particular, I want to mention my constituent Jack Ferrero, who has been most insistent that this legislation be tabled and come as soon as possible to this House. It is regretful that we are three years into this term and are only debating it now.

Canada ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities back in 2010. That convention elaborated a human rights framework for addressing the exclusion and the lack of access persons with disabilities have encountered in Canada. This is both physical access to buildings and access to services. It was intended to establish a society where "persons with disabilities are viewed as full citizens with exactly the same rights and responsibilities as other citizens of Canada."

Only three provinces in Canada have accessibility laws, and federally, Canada does not. I have heard in great detail from constituents that the need is dire. The following is part of a letter from a man in my riding, Terry Wiens. I am pretty sure that he is a Nanaimo resident. This is a long and heartbreaking letter, which I will read in part. He had polio and is facing extraordinary costs associated with his disability. He writes:

"I recently had to buy a new RoHo Hybrid cushion for my wheelchair ($820) as well as a hospital bed ($1800 mattress not included) so decided to make a one-time withdrawal of $10,000 from my RIF. What I didn't realize was the ripple effect of that decision. That raised my annual income enough to eliminate me

from the Guaranteed Income Supplement (all $18/month worth). I have no doubt that next year I will qualify again, but in the meantime, we are penalized for our independence. You can't really compare the income of an individual that is facing costs that the average person never sees. To add insult to injury, losing that GIS also cost me my Premium Medical Services subsidy, another $420 a year, my opportunity for a subsidized assisted living apartment, because GIS qualification is required for the subsidized program, and a cutback to my rental subsidy and doubling (from $450 to $900 yearly) of my Pharmacare deductible. It is not the $18/month payment but the status of qualifying for GIS that is important."

It is a terrible example of government services not supporting the people who are working the hardest and have the most barriers in front of them.

I have another letter from a person in my riding, who asked to keep her name confidential. She writes:

"It is with great dismay that I write to you about a problem with the pension plans. I am 69 years old, I have some disabilities and my only income is from the government pensions and some money that was awarded to me from a divorce. My total income is under $20,000 per year. I have recently been informed that because I receive $250.00 per month from my divorce judgment that I am losing $1,000.00 per year on my pension. This is a clawback if I have ever seen one. How can the government do this to the very people that for 50 or more years of working and being the back bone of the country do this to their seniors? In B.C., the previous provincial government did this to welfare recipients until they complained, and now it can't claw back those monies."

● (1520)

"I have personally seen local seniors going through garbage cans looking for cans and bottles just to make ends meet."

"I take exception to the government saying that we have a class system in our country and they will do everything for the "middle" class and nothing for seniors. To be politically correct, we have low income, medium income and high income. Since when did Canada decide that we have a class system? I have worked all my life, served in the Armed Forces and this is how I get treated. I applied for the disability tax credit, and although I had three things that were on their list to qualify, I was refused and even told that if I went any further with my claim that I might be responsible for legal fees."

I have a dozen letters like this that describe the people who the social safety net in Canada is meant to be supporting, the people who are meant to be getting help from these government programs and are thwarted again and again.

I am going to read a summary from my fantastic caseworker, Hilary Eastmure, who helps a lot of people out at our front desk. She says:

"Canadians accustomed to getting reliable service are becoming quickly disillusioned with our system, which is getting increasingly difficult to navigate. The shift to online platforms is also a major stumbling block for Canadians of all ages, including those who don't have regular access to a computer or printer or those who are not computer literate. Being told to access or submit a form online is a major source of frustration for people with disabilities, seniors and low-income Canadians, the very people who often require the most support from government agencies."

We have in front of us Bill C-81, which is meant to remove those barriers. However, I have to emphasize the design of the civil service, the design of the interface between the people the system is meant to serve and their ability to access these programs.

Bill C-81 would empower the government to create accessibility standards or regulations, but it would not require the government to do that. We like the idea of an accessibility commissioner in charge of enforcement.

New Democrats are going to support this proposed legislation at first reading so we can get it to committee and make as many constructive amendments as we can to serve the people with disabilities who need this to work well, but we could not support it if it were to come back in this form.

The bill would not bring us into conformity with our obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The text on civil rights legislation for persons with disabilities is really the Americans with Disabilities Act, which is dated 1990. We have a good model out there. Canadians should be at least meeting the standard set by the Americans.

My New Democrat fellow MP for New Westminster—Burnaby in 2007 tabled proposed legislation in the House. My fellow MP in this Parliament, the MP for Windsor—Tecumseh, has been very strong as our critic for the NDP on this bill, saying that any accessibility bill tabled has to be seen as enabling legislation for Canada's commitments to the United Nations. Therefore, we will be pushing in committee for mandatory timelines for implementation. Without those, the implementation process, and even a start-up process, could drag on for years.

We will be pushing to require that all federal government laws, policies and programs be studied through a disability law lens. We will be asking that the bill not continue its error right now of giving several public agencies or officials much too much power to grant partial or blanket exemptions from important parts of the bill. The bill right now would separate enforcement and implementation in a confusing way over four different public agencies. In committee the NDP will argue instead that Bill C-81 should provide people with disabilities with a single service location or one-stop shopping so that they can access the services with dignity and the support they need.

Mr. Speaker, I am splitting my time, but I have no indication of who it is with. I have finished my speech, though.

● (1525)

Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Science and Sport and to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility (Accessibility), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree with my hon. colleague, who has underscored the importance of moving this legislation from second reading to committee, because obviously there are some questions the NDP want to ask.

The hon. member also raised issues about seniors. We are so pleased that we now have a minister responsible for seniors issues, who will be working closely with the Minister of Accessibility to move some of those concerns forward.

I really do suggest that the hon. member get in touch with the ministers and express her concerns at that level, or at committee. I look forward to that.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Mr. Speaker, I have written to the Prime Minister directly on this. I have outlined to him the multiple ways I am hearing from every sector of my riding, whether business people trying to access the CRA, or seniors trying to navigate the Canada pension plan and the GIS, or families waiting for key answers from Citizenship and Immigration about whether their family members might qualify for reunification, or anything.

I have raised this a number of times in the House, and in the summer I wrote to the Prime Minister directly, because I was so dismayed at what I was hearing from people once I was back in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith. I have had no answer.

It is clear that the government has chosen not to restore the public service and the front-line people who are meant to be serving. To have people kicked off phone lines or left on hold interminably, or for them to have to call 20 times to even have the privilege of being put on hold, says that everyone is being challenged by a broken system.

● (1530)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if I am not mistaken, speeches are limited to 10 minutes at this time, with five minutes for questions and answers. My colleague was therefore not sharing her time.

My question is simple. I often have people who come to my office with some sort of problem. The problem might be related to a lack of services. People never really know what falls under provincial or federal jurisdiction. They come to us even when their problem falls under provincial jurisdiction. People do not always know what they need to do to obtain services.

If people have to go to four different departments on top of that in order to obtain services, what kind of impact is that going to have on those individuals?

[*English*]

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Mr. Speaker, it was a particularly discouraging situation for my fellow New Democrat member of Parliament for Windsor—Tecumseh when she introduced her Bill C-348. If the bill had been supported by the government, it would have provided persons living with disabilities a single point of entry to access federal programs.

As it is right now, a person living with a disability has to apply to six different programs in six different ways, whereas my fellow New Democrat's bill sought to have them prove just once that they had a disability and then that same proof and application could allow them to enter into the multitude of government programs available for people with disabilities. Her bill, unfortunately, was voted down by the government. The Liberals suggested that we should wait for Bill C-81.

Unfortunately, the remedy that was in Bill C-348 was not replicated in this legislation. It is a real disappointment, because the people who are the most vulnerable need the most help. My colleague might have to work harder.

I have honestly heard a number of people say they are going to give up, which means they are living in poverty and in terrible circumstances. In a country as rich as ours, that should not be so.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill C-81, an act to ensure a barrier-free Canada today. Almost every Canadian family has or knows someone with a disability. They were either born with it or became disabled some time in their life. I have long advocated for the rights of those with disabilities, as I know first hand the daily challenges and barriers they face. My own son, who fell in a work-related accident 14 years ago last week, has shown me how someone, through tremendous perseverance, can come through great adversity.

There are also great Canadian heroes, such as Rick Hansen, who have inspired millions around the globe. Through his Man in Motion World Tour, he raised awareness and helped raise millions of dollars for research. To date, Rick has continued his advocacy and is a beacon of hope to all those who are impacted by disability. In my own constituency, my annual charity golf tournament has donated thousands of dollars to the Rick Hansen Foundation and Special Olympics.

Our society has come a long way in recognizing that those with disabilities have a lot to offer. They are full members of society and must have the same access and rights as anyone else. I am proud to belong a party that has advocated and supported many of the measures that have improved the lives of Canadians who suffer from a disability.

Just next month, the Right Hon. Brian Mulroney will be conducted into the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame for his steadfast support, and for being a strong national leader on this issue. He was the first prime minister to appoint a minister responsible for disabled persons. This ensured that there was an advocate for the disabled around the cabinet table. His government also created the disabled persons' participation program, which dramatically increased support for organizations involved with disabled people. It was also his government that expanded disability-related deductions for income tax purposes. Let us never forget that it was the Hon. Jim Flaherty who implemented the registered disabilities savings plan and heavily invested in the opportunities fund to help persons with disabilities get the necessary training to obtain employment.

These are just some of the tangible actions that have dramatically improved people's lives. We know that the first step in breaking down barriers involves education and helping people better understand the everyday challenges those with disabilities face. Since being elected as the member of Parliament for Brandon—Souris, I have been a staunch advocate of the enabling accessibility fund, which has supported projects that have made buildings and community infrastructure more accessible. Just this summer, I worked with a community-led organization in Ninette, Manitoba to make it easier for those in wheelchairs to access Pelican Lake. I have worked with communities to secure the necessary funding to renovate bathrooms in places like the Deloraine theatre, so they can be accessible to seniors. I worked with the Brandon Legion so that veterans can now access all parts of their building as well.

These are just a few of the projects that have happened in my neck of the woods, but they are a good reminder that one does not have to reinvent the wheel to make buildings or workplaces more accessible. I am encouraged that this legislation would establish proactive compliance measures. Making buildings and workplaces accessible should never be an afterthought; it should be at the forefront of any architect or engineer's plans. It is important that we have common accessibility standards across the board.

While I note that this legislation only impacts federally regulated workplaces, it is my sincere hope that it will lead to a much broader conversation within provinces and territories. I believe there is willingness across the country to get this done. There is such opportunity for businesses and organizations to encourage as many people as possible to either be employed, to volunteer, or to shop.

I have been inspired by my colleague, the member for Brantford—Brant, who passed a motion in the last Parliament that called on Canadian employers to take action on hiring persons with disabilities. He started a much-needed conversation about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities and improving their quality of life.

I also want to highlight my colleague, the member for Carleton, who led the charge earlier this year with his proposed opportunity for workers with disabilities act. I strongly support his efforts to reform government policies that financially punish people with disabilities when they get a job, earn a raise or work more hours, forcing them to remain jobless and impoverished. He had widespread support for his legislation and I know that he will continue to be a strong advocate for disabled Canadians.

● (1535)

To provide one more example, my colleague from Tobique—Mactaquac championed his motion, Motion No. 157, which encouraged builders and contractors to adhere to visitability guidelines and to be proactive when constructing new buildings. I believe his motion helped inspire many of the elements contained in Bill C-81, and I applaud him for all he has done in this area.

As with any new regulation or law, we must always be mindful about the costs to be borne by those who will be impacted. The other element we have to look at is what it will cost taxpayers to implement, enforce and measure. It costs money to hire people and to perform the day-to-day operations of a new federal entity.

I think all members would agree that we should measure the success or deficiencies of a particular program or organization.

The question at the end of the day is this: Does the federal government need to set up completely new bodies, or can we find ways to harness existing resources? While the fine details will be worked out at a later date, I urge the government to focus squarely on tangible outcomes and projects that will improve accessibility. It would be disappointing if all of the dollars allocated to this legislation just created new full-time equivalents rather than going to bricks and mortar projects. These are the sorts of questions that must be asked up front, because once a government entity is created, it is normally quite difficult to make the necessary changes down the road.

Because this legislation will only impact federally regulated workplaces, most small businesses and community-led organizations will not be directly impacted. That said, the federal government must work hand in hand with federally regulated workplaces and the disabled community. For this legislation to have the impact that we all want it to have, it cannot be drafted in a silo or entirely by the civil service. The regulations and standards must be written in easy-to-comprehend language. There must be crystal clear expectations, coupled with appropriate enforcement measures. I also encourage everyone involved to look for best practices not only in the various provinces, but also around the world, and we must make sure that we do not just create another bureaucratic institution.

Building a new institution that would just create mounds of paperwork and have limited buy-in from workplaces would not be in anyone's best interest. I know that when this legislation goes to committee, there will be great interest in it. It would be prudent for the government to provide the committee with as much information as possible so there is meaningful dialogue. It is imperative that the minister spend the necessary time to get this right. I will definitely be voting in favour of this legislation so that it gets the proper study and engagement it so rightfully deserves.

● (1540)

Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Science and Sport and to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility (Accessibility), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no question that the implementation and administration of this accessibility legislation is going to take resources and investments. Where possible, I agree that we would build on our existing authorities and expertise. This only makes sense in efficiency and cost savings terms. I am certainly not thinking that the member opposite would suggest that we should not put money and resources to this very important issue.

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, we all know there will be resources used to implement the program and move it forward. I see that the government has committed to providing $290 million over six years to upgrade federal workplaces and a number of facilities, but I want to make sure that this money is indeed used for that type of work, as opposed to creating a new bureaucracy, as I said in my speech.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is nice to have my colleague's long memory and the realization that it was under the previous government of Brian Mulroney when we had our first minister for disabilities issues.

I found this legislation curious, in that it states that the Governor in Council may appoint a minister to be responsible for this area of responsibility. I think it is clearly the government's intent that there will be such a minister because so much hangs on a minister acting.

Can the hon. member for Brandon—Souris suggest any reason why this would not be supported by all parties to make it a mandatory responsibility of cabinet to appoint a minister to have conduct of Bill C-81?

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, I cannot think of a good reason. However, not being the government and among the ones who put this bill forward, I guess we will have to leave that up to them.

My colleague is quite right about the wording of the bill. I wanted to make very clear as well that the government may have some reason for not using that and going forward with it, but we want to make sure. There may even be amendments that will still come forward in this bill as it goes to second reading.

Mr. David Yurdiga (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I stand before you to support Bill C-81, an act to ensure a barrier-free Canada. The bill is an excellent step in the right direction in reducing barriers for people living with disabilities.

Millions of Canadians are impacted by some form of disability. Every day, more Canadians are either afflicted or diagnosed with life-altering disease, ailments or injury. It is estimated that 3.5 million Canadians live with some form of disability and 1.4 million Canadians live with a disability that requires daily care.

Disabilities can be physical, mental or episodic in nature. Unfortunately, Canadians with disabilities are on average under-employed, earn less and are twice as likely to be victims of abuse.

This is an issue near and dear to my heart. In 2004, my wife Kathy was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. Ever since, my family and I have worked together to navigate the often difficult road for people with disabilities. My wife's disability, MS, is an unpredictable, chronic, often disabling disease of the central nervous system. When someone or their loved one is diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, life can change in an instant.

Kathy suffers from what is called an episodic disability. This means sometimes her body functions normally and then it sometimes stops working the way she needs it to.

Canadian legislation should treat individuals living with all types of disabilities equally. A disability can happen to anyone, anytime, without warning, and so it is of interest to everyone to protect Canadian citizens living with disabilities. Every Canadian deserves the same rights as any other. However, most Canadians with disabilities are treated differently, not only by society, but by the very institutions put in place to protect them.

It is true that there are thousands of pre-existing programs and funding options for people with disabilities, but we all know we can do more and we can do better. The 2015 Liberal platform promised they would eliminate systemic barriers and deliver equality of opportunity to all Canadians living with disabilities by introducing a national disabilities act.

The bill sets out to benefit all Canadians, especially Canadians with disabilities, through the progressive realization of a barrier-free Canada. Over $290 million has been committed to be spent over six years. This is an excellent first step, but people with disabilities deserve more. They deserve more funding, more research, more programs and more access.

Together, we can create better employment supports; improve income and disability support; increase access to treatment, comprehensive care and housing; and invest in fundamental research for all disabilities.

Stakeholders, community leaders, health care professionals and of course, Canadians with disabilities are all saying the same thing: This legislation is a step in the right direction. We can always do more to create equity in legislation for Canadians with disabilities. As the Government of Canada, we can and we should do more.

We need to give Canadians back the dignity and independence they deserve. It is time to break down barriers in the way of individual success. Creating an equality of opportunity should be a top priority. With the increased investment, we can provide employment opportunities, foster a safer environment within society, provide new information and communication technologies, and deliver better quality programs and services to Canadians living with disabilities. Together we can make these changes.

Of course, the government alone cannot change the way people with disabilities are treated here in Canada. There are several noble organizations that play a fundamental role in providing programming, education and scientific research for Canadians with disabilities.

Over the past few months, I had the honour of working with my friends at the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada. Together, we drafted private member's Motion No. 192. This motion strives to ensure Canadians living with episodic disabilities like multiple sclerosis are treated equitably in Canadian legislation.

● (1545)

With their help, we have reached over 3,000 signatures on our online petition, and we have received thousands of pieces of correspondence in support of the motion. The outpouring of support in favour of this motion from Canadian people has touched me and my family to no end.

When my wife was unexpectedly diagnosed with MS 14 years ago, our entire world changed. Everyday tasks became difficult for her to complete and we had to re-evaluate the role she played in our family business. Disability changes everything. It impacts not only the physical ability for someone to do something, but also the way society treats the individual and his or her economic opportunities in the workforce. My private member's motion aims to shed light on the fact that people living with disabilities and their families face several challenges in securing employment, income and disability support. They struggle daily in accessing treatment, comprehensive care and housing, and moving around in the communities where they live.

Research is the most important step to obtain new treatments and better quality of life, and increased funding is the best way to kick-start the pursuit of a cure. There should always be a desire for our government to lend a helping hand. No one should be forced to face living with a disability alone. This is why I ask my friends and colleagues sitting here with me today to commit to supporting all legislation put forward to benefit Canadians living with disabilities. While Bill C-81 is a step in the right direction, there is still so much more the government can do for Canadians with disabilities. The barriers that exist for Canadians living with disabilities are unacceptable. Together, we must tear all barriers down and make Canada an international model for disability equality.

● (1550)

Ms. Kate Young (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Science and Sport and to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility (Accessibility), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for sharing his personal story. It really does come from the heart. The other day, I was able to share some of my personal stories too. As the member was saying, everybody is touched by people with disabilities. I agree totally with what he said, that disabilities change everything. That is why I am so proud that we are able to move forward with this legislation. Really, it is the first step. Our goal is to make accessibility a reality across the federal jurisdiction.

Would the hon. member agree with me that the federal government should be a leader in this field, so that others will follow suit?

Mr. David Yurdiga: Mr. Speaker, yes we should be leaders. Being a leader is all about making changes. I did not understand the reality of people living with a disability and what they have to go through until I experienced it myself. Often, we hear stories about people suffering and not having access and we do not really appreciate it until it affects us directly. I am appreciative of this bill coming forward. It is needed and I am looking forward to the discussions in committee. I believe there is going to be a positive note to this. Everybody wants to do what he or she can to assure the people who are disabled or potentially will be disabled through accidents or whatever it may be, that we should be there and we are going in the right direction.

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, everyone in the House wants to do something to help Canadians who are having challenges. The debate in this House more or less is how we go about doing that. I wonder if I could get the member's opinion. This bill, I believe, is $290 million, but there are not a lot of details here. Is it something that we want to create a new bureaucracy for, or do we want to use this money to help people with disabilities? I wonder if the member could give his opinion. Does he think this bill gives enough detail about what the money would be used for, and does he think it would be helpful on the ground for people who do have disabilities?

Mr. David Yurdiga: Mr. Speaker, it is true. It is how we spend our dollars. If we were to spend the majority of the money on bureaucracy, we would not be helping anyone. We should use the resources we have in our various departments, and not create a new one, to make a difference for people suffering with disabilities.

● (1555)

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to Bill C-81, an act to ensure a barrier-free Canada. I think all of us in the House have a story about someone in their families, or their friends or their circle of network who has experienced some kind of barrier to participating fully in their community.

I know my colleague for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake spoke about issues with his family member who had multiple sclerosis. I am going to do the same because it feels very appropriate right now.

My mother had a very progressive form of multiple sclerosis and quickly went from a very thriving person, full of life and active in the community to slowly finding herself unable to participate, unable to even get out of bed on some occasions. For someone so active, that was hard to take. She was used to getting up everyday, going to work, coming home and going out to volunteer. It really took its toll.

When something like that happens, we start to realize the things we take for granted, such as working in the kitchen. If we have trouble standing that day, all of a sudden we cannot reach the cupboards on the top, or when we go into the bathroom, we are unable to step over the top of the tub. All of these challenges can become very real, very quickly and, at many times, very costly.

Thanks a number of organizations that are working to help remove barriers, like the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation and many others, my mother was able to find ways to help her adapt to this new reality and to help us, as a family, come to terms with the it. I think many Canadians struggle with that. We all have friends who have been diagnosed with an illness that may start very quickly or may start very slowly, which gives that person more time to react.

As I mentioned at the beginning of my speech that my mother's form of MS was very progressive and moved quite quickly. At first when we heard the news, coming to terms with it was one thing. Then it was trying to figure out what the next steps would be. Trying to locate all the services available in our communities was very tough.

It can be quite overwhelming for family members as well as they try to go about their daily lives and deal with this new reality. Unfortunately, overtime she was unable to walk anymore and was confined to a wheelchair. To go outside her front door, she needed a ramp. It was an extensive ramp, because the house was built on a bit of a hill, which was a challenge for us as well. Just going along the sidewalk in our municipality was a challenge. Being from Ontario, winters can be long and sidewalks are not cleared as often, which becomes a problem. Often the curbs were high and the wheelchair was unable to get onto the road to allow her to cross.

Again, these were challenges for someone who was active at one time. To now go into the community and participate, these challenges were very real and hard to overcome at times, especially as she was suffering.

It affects a person's mental health as well and the desire to go out into the community and participate. It kind of wears on that person. My mother certainly dealt with that. At times, she did not want to go outside. I should point out that my mother was a very positive person. She was a fighter.

I share this story, as my colleagues on both sides of the House have done, to talk about the importance of creating a barrier-free Canada in which everyone can participate fully in their communities.

On this side of the House, we are going to support Bill C-81 at second reading. We thank the government for bringing it forward. This will allow all of us to have a robust debate in committee, and in the House, and talk about how we can make all our communities in Canada more accessible for everyone, not just those who do not have mobility issues.

I thank everyone who participated in the debate. I know for some it was challenging to bring their stories forward . However, by bringing our circumstances from real life forward, it shows that we are all in this together.

● (1600)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I join my colleague in voting for Bill C-81 at second reading to go to committee. I do so in the fervent hope that we will see many improvements made to it at committee.

I do not understand why at this stage, after years of consultation, we would bring forward legislation to achieve a barrier-free Canada that uses language like "progressive realization of". I have checked and there is no legislation anywhere else in Canada on any topic that sets a goal of "progressive realization of". Our legislation usually says that by so many years or months from royal assent, we will have achieved tangible goals.

The disability groups that have commented on the proposed legislation say that "progressive realization of" could mean one ramp a year built somewhere across Canada to remove a barrier. I do not think the government and the fine ministers who brought the bill forward actually intend a go-slow plan to remove barriers. This is why I hope that in committee the Conservatives, the New Democrats and the Liberal members of the committee will accept amendments to provide real progress, which is measurable toward a barrier-free Canada.

I invite the member's thoughts on this as we go to committee.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member. There are items in the bill about which we on this side of the House have a few questions and concerns. It is an opportunity in committee to iron out the finer details.

All of us will carefully examine the legislation as it progresses through committee. Hopefully, witnesses are able to come to committee to provide testimony and their suggestions on how to improve the bill. All of us will have another opportunity to look at the final draft and then make a final decision on it.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate hearing the story from my colleague on the issues he had to deal with regarding a family member.

One of the things we most recently saw, as a result of the horrific accident in Humboldt involving the hockey team, was not only the deaths as as result of that accident but what the families had to go through.

An individual became a paraplegic as a result of that accident. He has been fighting back. Most recently, he has been playing sled hockey. He wants to show the different things one can do. It is fantastic to see what he is bringing to the public by showing that one can break through the barriers that may be out there. However, we, as a governing body, need to help with that.

I wonder if my colleague might be able to mention an example of a barrier that his family had to overcome. He mentioned a few, but maybe other examples of barriers might come to mind where the government could eventually work to break them down.

● (1605)

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Mr. Speaker, I agree that there are many barriers, from people simply not being able to stand one day to all of a sudden they are unable to reach the cupboard above their heads, which is on a personal level, or going out into the community and trying to navigate a sidewalk, or entering a place of business that does not have a ramp, or has a lip that a wheelchair cannot get over or has a door that is not wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair. Several barriers still exist even today.

When we do not have an issue with mobility, sometimes we do not even think about those barriers or something that may appear so small to us could be a really big deal for those who are not mobile.

This is a good first step. I look forward to it going to committee and seeing the testimony that comes out of that. We on this side of the House think there are areas that need to be fixed, as does the member from the Green Party. Hopefully that can be done in a robust way.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent speech. He provided us with a greater understanding of the challenges people face with regard to mobility.

We always rely on support staff on these types of files. On that subject, I want to acknowledge the research and writing that went into my speech on Bill C-81. That work was done by Hugo Berthiaume, who recently joined my team as an assistant. I wish him lots of luck and especially lots of work. Opposition members often rise in the House to talk about good causes and the people who are important to them, the people in their ridings.

In this case, we are speaking on behalf of persons with reduced mobility, who have to overcome many barriers in their lives.

Bill C-81, an act to ensure a barrier-free Canada, is a step in the right direction. Every member in the House supports measures to reduce barriers for all Canadians in every aspect of their lives.

Canadians with disabilities deserve to have a government that always keeps mobility in mind to ensure that those with reduced mobility can live in a barrier-free society.

Unfortunately, even if it is a step in the right direction, Bill C-81 will not improve the lives of Canadians with disabilities in the short term. To this day, our society does not always bring forward measures that will make life easier for Canadians with disabilities.

We believe that we need to take action to help them, and we want to work with the government to find real solutions. However, this bill is proof that the Liberal government is somewhat out of touch and that it does not always understand the challenges that people with disabilities must face. With this bill, the government is going to use taxpayers' money to write reports or action plans.

I am going to talk a bit about my experience as mayor and, in particular, as the former president of an association that works to improve the quality of life of the disabled on a daily basis.

People with reduced mobility need us to deal with their infrastructure, both their homes and their workplaces. We must do everything we can to make it possible for them to get to work and contribute to Canadian society.

We need to help more Canadians with mobility issues enter the workforce. Our political party has always been committed to our country's economic development, and we believe that absolutely everyone can contribute.

There is no greater boost than feeling a sense of accomplishment and achieving one's full potential. Too many Canadians live and work in environments that, unfortunately, do not meet their needs. For example, they have poorly adapted apartments or houses, there are too few parking reserved spots at shop entrances, and public transit systems are inadequate.

It is our responsibility to do more and do better for those most vulnerable. We must work hard to ensure that every single Canadian has access to the same society, regardless of their physical abilities. On this side of the House, our goal is to help all Canadians.

The Liberal government wants to invest $290 million to develop accessibility plans and set objectives. I repeat, it wants to invest $290 million to develop accessibility plans and set objectives.

That seems like a lot of money to me. This money will be spent over a period of six years. Does that mean we will have to wait six years to see any changes? Will any other funding be announced in the meantime for putting these plans into action and achieving the objectives? Unfortunately, the bill before us has no answers to those questions, so it is hard for us to get a clear idea of what is actually going to come out of Bill C-81.

Canadians with disabilities cannot understand how a government can think it is totally normal to spend $290 million on plans and objectives. These people are living their lives right now, and now is when they want improved living conditions, accessible workplaces, and help to participate in this country's economic development.

People with mobility issues do not need a government that will invest in bureaucracy. They need a government that will actually tackle problems by adapting infrastructure.

● (1610)

I just want to point out that it was the Harper Conservative government that signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2007. The purpose of this convention is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity. The previous government created the enabling accessibility fund, which had a real impact on Canadians' everyday lives by funding infrastructure upgrades for thousands of Canadians. That is the way to help Canadian families and people with reduced mobility. This fund is still being used today to build projects in my riding and in many of my colleagues' ridings. It does not take six years of study to figure out when a two-storey building needs a stair lift.

The Liberals are pros at running deficits and burdening future generations. The worst part is that the money is being spent on plans and committees instead of going directly to the people it is supposed to help. We have a lot of questions, as I said. We know the Liberal government wants to create a Canadian accessibility standards development organization. The bill seems pretty good at first blush. Will the government be working closely with people with reduced mobility? Why wait so long before taking action? How will that $290 million be spent? I sure hope the government will be consulting the people it is supposed to be helping and will invite them to play an active role in the organization.

As I was saying, there are far too many unknowns in this bill. Again, with this $290 million we can really make a difference in people's lives. I can only imagine what local advocacy groups in each of our ridings can do with $290 million over six years to help persons with disabilities. These organizations work miracles with very little money. Through their actions and awareness raising they manage to get municipal and private buildings adapted. They achieve that with little to no resources. Therefore, $290 million is good. If it is needed, it is good, but if it is going to be used only to draft plans that will be shelved then we have cause to reconsider and to be concerned. We sincerely hope this is not the case.

We have many concerns. I would remind hon. members that it was not so long ago that we were standing here heavily criticizing the criteria for tax credits for persons with disabilities that penalized countless people with diabetes. Fortunately, the opposition's repeated questions made the government take a step back and correct the situation. However, would the government really have changed its mind if advocates and the official opposition had not spoken out against this anomaly? I have my doubts.

For all of these reasons, we need more answers to our questions in order to ensure that taxpayers' money will actually be used to benefit people with disabilities, whether in federal buildings or elsewhere. The Liberals do not have a very impressive track record when it comes to accessibility. Canadians expect better. The Liberals have been in office for three years, and they are just now beginning to take an interest in this issue, even though this was one of their election promises.

Let us come back to Bill C-81, an act to ensure a barrier-free Canada. Mobility is one of society's major challenges, and it is even more of a problem for people with disabilities. I would say that this is an ongoing battle in these people's lives. Every day they have to deal with difficult situations that may seem trivial to others. People with reduced mobility do not have the same access everywhere. Think about the shelves at the supermarket and other stores, offices that are not adapted, and workplaces they cannot get to. There are far too many places and things that are inaccessible to them.

We must be ambitious. The proposed plan is questionable. It serves only to implement bureaucratic measures that will have no real impact on these people's lives. We need to be more aware of this reality and always be in a position to act. There is still a lot of work to be done before we have proper facilities for all Canadians. We must give all Canadians the same opportunity to be empowered. In order to get there, we must be more inclusive and include as many organizations as possible. We must address the issue of accessibility in close co-operation with the provinces and municipalities across the country.

We can do better. We hope that we will get some answers in committee and that we will be able make amendments to the bill so that it really meets the needs of the people it is targeting, and so achieves in , thus creating a more barrier-free Canada.

● (1615)

[*English*]

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Mégantic made a very passionate speech.

I look back and want to talk about our former colleague, Jim Flaherty. What a champion he was for Canadians with disabilities. I remember when we brought in the RDSP, registered disability savings plan, the current minister said it was a real game-changer.

One of the things Jim championed in my community in Durham region was the Abilities Centre. Mr. Speaker, if you ever get a chance to come to my community, I hope I can give you a tour and introduce you to this wonderful centre. It could have been called the "disabilities centre", but they named it the Abilities Centre because it focuses on Canadians who have challenges to work with their abilities to make their lives and the lives of other Canadians better. It is a wonderful institution.

I will be supporting sending the bill to committee. However, my concern with the bill is to make sure that it is making a difference. The things we put in as a government really did make a difference.

I wonder if my colleague could comment on what he would like to see in the bill after it goes to committee. What kind of changes does he want to see? Does he think there was enough consultation done on how to spend this money?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, I will begin by acknowledging the excellent work of our former colleague, Jim Flaherty.

I am going to take my colleague up on his offer. I would like to visit the centre he just talked about because we do focus a lot on the disabilities rather than the abilities. Many members should tour this centre. We tend to take for granted that there is always someone else taking care of these problems and the people who really need help. We always believe that an association or that someone in some government agency is looking after it for us. However, that is not always the case.

Now the government is telling us that it is going to spend $290 million on this file, but what exactly is it going to do with that money? They are going to hire people who will prepare plans. What will happen next? What are they going to do with those plans? What guarantees does Bill C-81 provide that there will be real change?

If that is the cost of making changes in these peoples' lives, it is a small price to pay. However, if nothing comes of it, it is money down the drain.

[*English*]

Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think most of us in the House have had some experience with someone with a disability. I have spoken many times about ALS, and every June I try to give a statement on ALS, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. My father succumbed to ALS. He went through the stages of using one cane to two canes to a walker to a wheelchair to a bed to a point where he could not eat on his own. This was obviously very difficult for my family, but we learned a lot of things. For example, we learned that not all doors in businesses or people's houses are wide enough to allow a wheelchair through. We learned the difficulties of just doing simple things, such as the assistance that people need when going to the bathroom. One of my colleagues talked about ramps. There are other simple things, such as how to get into an elevator with a wheelchair.

I do not really have a question for my colleague, but I would like to congratulate the government for bringing this bill forward. I could sit and talk about the many things the Conservative government did, but others can do that. I simply want to congratulate the government for making an effort to deal with people with disabilities.

● (1620)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, every step taken by the previous or the current government towards a barrier-free Canada and to help people with reduced mobility fully participate in life in Canada is worthwhile. We hope that this stage will be successful and we pledge to the government that our party will collaborate, to the extent that we feel all parties are truly collaborating in committee in order to improve this bill.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The question is on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

* * *

[*English*]

DIVORCE ACT

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.) moved that Bill C-78, an act to amend the Divorce Act, the Family Orders and Agreements Enforcement Assistance Act and the Garnishment, Attachment and Pension Diversion Act and to make consequential amendments to another act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure that I rise today to speak to Bill C-78. The bill, which I tabled on May 22 of this year, would help support and protect families, especially children, from the negative outcomes and conflicts that are the sad reality of separation and divorce.

Our government has taken great strides to strengthen the Canadian family justice system. In budget 2017, we created ongoing funding for federal, provincial and territorial family justice activities through the Canadian family justice fund. In the same year, we also signed two international family law conventions. This year in budget 2018, we announced funding to expand unified family courts, fulfilling one of my mandate letter commitments. However, despite all this progress, we still need to do more.

Separation and divorce can be difficult for families, especially for children. We know that the impacts can be wide-reaching. Over two million children live in families with separated or divorced parents. There is no other area of law that touches as many Canadians.

Federal family laws should help families resolve their disputes quickly and effectively, but these laws have not been substantially updated in over 20 years and were in desperate need of modernization. Over the past two decades, families have changed and our justice system has changed. Our government understands that much should be done to improve federal family laws and the family justice system to better meet the needs of all Canadians.

Bill C-78 advances four critically important goals: promoting the best interests of the child, addressing family violence, reducing child poverty, and improving the efficiencies and accessibility of the family justice system. I will address all of these in turn.

I will begin with the best interests of the child. The best interests of the child test is the cornerstone of family law. It is the only basis upon which decisions about who may care for a child can be made under the Divorce Act. This test has been called a child's "positive right to the best possible arrangements in the circumstances". It allows courts to consider how to best foster the child's overall development and protect the child from conflict and the disruptive effects of divorce at such a vulnerable point in the child's life.

Despite the importance of the best interests of the child test, the Divorce Act currently provides minimal guidance on how courts should apply this test. Bill C-78 would change this. It proposes an extensive, though not exhaustive, list of criteria for courts to consider when making decisions in the best interests of the child.

The criteria we have proposed include elements such as the child's needs, given the age and stage of the child's development, the child's relationships with important people in his or her life, especially parents but also others such as grandparents, and the child's culture and heritage, including indigenous heritage.

One criterion in particular, the requirement that courts consider the views and preferences of the child, giving due weight to the child's age and maturity, demonstrates Canada's ongoing commitment to its obligation under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This criterion encourages parents and courts to consider the voice of the child in determining parenting arrangements reflecting the importance of children expressing their views in matters that affect them.

The most significant change that Bill C-78 would bring to the best interests of the child test and the lens through which all other factors would be examined is the provision that would be called the "primary consideration". This would be a requirement that courts consider the child's physical, emotional and psychological safety, security and well-being. It would help ensure that the most critical elements of the child's well-being are always the centre of focus and of any best interests analysis.

Also, to further the best interests of the child, we are proposing to remove the terms "custody" and "access" from the Divorce Act. For years, these terms have been criticized for fuelling conflict between parents. Custodial parents have been long seen as the winners of custody disputes and access parents have long been seen as the losers. The terms are relics from property law, reflecting a time when children were legally considered to be their parents' property.

● (1625)

To help parents collaborate and focus on their child's best interests, we are introducing terms based on parents' responsibilities for their children. Instead of custody orders, courts would make parenting orders. Parenting orders would address parenting time and decision-making responsibility. Two provinces, Alberta and British Columbia, and many of our international partners, such as Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, have replaced property-based language with this sort of language focused on the child-parent relationship. In Canada, even where custody and access are still on the statute books, many judges, lawyers and other family justice professionals have already begun to abandon property-based language in their orders and agreements about children, favouring language focused on the parent-child relationships.

Another major change Bill C-78 proposes with the best interests of the child in mind is the creation of a relocation framework in the Divorce Act. Relocation or moving with children after separation and divorce is one of the most litigated areas in family law. The stakes are often very high, particularly when a proposed move would involve a significant geographic distance. The bill creates notice requirements for parents proposing to move, best interests criteria for courts to consider in relocation cases and rules for courts to apply depending on the parenting arrangement in place for the child. This would help courts and parents make informed, child-focused decisions.

Canada has recently taken steps to advance the interests of Canadian children in international family law disputes. On May 23, 2017, Canada signed two international family law conventions. One of these conventions, the 1996 convention on the protection of children, would make it easier for Canadian parenting orders to be recognized and enforced in other countries that are also party to the convention. This would provide better assurance to families that travel or relocate to another convention country that their Canadian court order would be respected. Bill C-78 also includes amendments that are necessary for Canada to become a party to the convention. The other convention is the 2007 child support convention, which would help with poverty reduction, as I will discuss a little further on.

The next aspect of Bill C-78 that I would like to address is family violence, an issue of great importance to our government and to all Canadians. Most provincial and territorial family laws address family violence in separating couples, but federal family laws are conspicuously silent. It is long past time to address this silence.

Although separation may be a means of escaping an abusive relationship, evidence shows that spouses are at an increased risk of violence at the time of separation. We are also learning about the lasting effects of trauma such as family violence on children's developing brains. The impact can be debilitating and lifelong. More can and must be done to prevent this from happening. Bill C-78 includes three amendments to address family violence in the Divorce Act and one in the Family Orders and Agreements Enforcement Assistance Act.

First, we have proposed an evidence-based definition of family violence in the Divorce Act that highlights common indicators of abusive behaviour. Coercive and controlling behaviour which is known to be particularly dangerous is highlighted.

Second, we have proposed a distinct set of best interests of the child criteria to help courts make appropriate parenting orders when there has been family violence. These include considerations such as the nature, seriousness and frequency of violence.

Third, we have a provision that would require courts to consider whether there are any child protection or criminal orders or any other proceedings that could influence an order under the Divorce Act. This provision would help prevent conflicts between courts, such as a family law order that gives a parent time with a child in a manner that conflicts with with a criminal restraining order.

● (1630)

Finally, we have proposed an amendment to the Family Orders and Agreements Enforcement Assistance Act that would restrict the sharing of personal information in situations of family violence where a family member's safety may be at risk.

Together, these measures would help courts better address family violence at a time when family members are particularly vulnerable, and help prevent family violence as families adjust to their new post-separation arrangements.

Next, I will explain how Bill C-78 would address poverty reduction, and child poverty specifically. Many families who go through separation and divorce experience a dramatic increase in expenses. The transition from a single family home with separate expenses to two homes with duplicate expenses can be a great burden. Shifting child care responsibilities can affect a parent's ability to find and maintain employment. These changes make many families vulnerable to poverty. Therefore, it is critically important that families receive the child and spousal support owed to them and that these amounts be fairly and properly calculated, reflecting accurate financial information.

Bill C-78 includes several measures that would help reduce poverty and help families recover from the financial crisis many experience as part of separation. First, we have proposed changes to the Divorce Act that would make it easier for families to determine and change child support without going to court, saving them money and, potentially, complication and stress. We have also proposed measures that would introduce a new application-based procedure to establish or vary a support order when parties reside in different jurisdictions.

Earlier, I mentioned the 1996 child protection convention. Canada also signed the 2007 child support convention. The 2007 convention will help families by providing a low-cost and efficient way to obtain or change support orders across international borders. As with the 1996 convention, amendments to federal laws are proposed as an essential step for Canada to becoming a party to the 2007 convention.

We are also proposing a number of changes to federal laws that would facilitate the enforcement of child and spousal support. For example, the Family Orders and Agreements Enforcement Assistance Act would be amended to allow for the search and release of a party's income information to courts and provincial services, including provincial enforcement services, for the purposes of establishing, varying or enforcing support. This amendment is intended to allow child support orders to be made more quickly, accurately and with less trouble and expense. Costs would be reduced for families and courts.

There are billions of dollars of unpaid child support payments in Canada. With this bill, we would be giving provinces, territories and individuals more tools to ensure that those obligations are being paid. In addition, the vast majority, some 96%, of cases registered in maintenance enforcement programs involve male payers paying female recipients. The problem of unpaid support contributes to the feminization of poverty, which the measures in this bill would help address.

Finally, another proposal in this bill is to prioritize child and spousal support debts above all other debts except Crown debts under the federal Garnishment, Attachment and Pension Diversion Act. Again, this would help make sure that families receive the money they are owed.

I will now move on to the bill's final theme, which is to improve the efficiency of, and families' access to, the Canadian family justice system. We know that changes to the family justice system are long overdue. Retired Supreme Court Justice Thomas Cromwell has noted the many calls for fundamental change to, or a paradigm shift in, the family justice system. Parents struggle to pay for lawyers and often have no choice but to represent themselves in family law disputes, which may be highly contentious and emotionally charged. It is not easy to be one's own advocate in these circumstances, yet research tells us that between 50% and 80% of Canadians in family law disputes represent themselves in court.

● (1635)

Self-represented family law litigants risk making choices without understanding their rights and obligations, and can find the process incredibly stressful. They also add to the strain of overburdened courts. Judges and court staff take significantly more time with self-represented litigants to help them navigate their complex legal challenges. The bill includes several measures to facilitate family law processes for families and to divert people away from the courts, saving time and resources for cases that require a judge's consideration.

One of these measures is to encourage family dispute resolution processes, which can include mediation, negotiation, collaborative law and other forms of out-of-court dispute resolution. These processes are generally less expensive, can help families come to agreements faster, and often allow parents to play a more active role in crafting appropriate arrangements for their families.

After the bill's proposed changes, lawyers would have a duty to tell parents about family justice services that could be of assistance to them and to encourage them to try a family dispute resolution where appropriate. Courts would have the option of referring parents to a family dispute resolution where available.

Other measures to increase access to family justice include expanding the range of measures that the administrative services that determine child support may address. Provinces and territories have administrative child support services that recalculate support orders based on a parent's current income. The bill would expand the role of these out-of-court services, including allowing for the recalculation of interim support orders. Families could use these services rather than having to retain lawyers to go to court to change their child support orders, again saving them money and reducing court time.

I would like to conclude by again stressing how important it is for our government to improve federal family laws. As I said, our family laws are outdated. They no longer reflect the reality of middle-class Canadian families. Many of the processes set out in federal family laws are slow, cumbersome and heavily dependent on the courts. Bill C-78 will help Canadians find faster, more cost-effective and lasting solutions to family law disputes, with the best interest of the child at the heart of all of it.

I am confident that the changes we have proposed would bring positive change to the Canadian family justice system and to Canadian families and children. I look forward to working with all of my parliamentary colleagues to help promote the best possible outcomes for families experiencing separation and divorce. I urge all hon. members to join me in supporting this incredibly important piece of legislation.

● (1640)

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated listening to the hon. minister outline what I believe is one of the most contentious and divisive situations we have in our country when families are in a state of divorce. When she talked about efficiencies, I would note that judges now have great latitude to direct people to go through mediation and those kinds of processes. When she outlined this, she talked about choices.

Is it her intention that the judges would still be able to direct people to go through processes where one party might want to and the other might not? Would the judges still have direction by which they could go through these new processes she is outlining, as it is one of the most contentious processes we have and one of the challenges for judges to deal with? If the people in the divorce process do not agree, will the judges still be involved in the process she is talking about?

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague across the way for the really important question, as well as stressing that for parents, and children in particular, who face separation and divorce, it can be really challenging and that there are and have to remain many ways to resolve these really contentious issues in complicated cases.

The focus of my remarks was on looking to out-of-court processes where appropriate, which parents who are going through a separation or divorce could take advantage of, and on putting a positive obligation on lawyers and legal agents to advise parents of these alternative dispute resolution processes. This does not in any way take away the ability to have these important matters to be heard before a judge. He or she would maintain their ability to determine what is appropriate in the particular circumstances. Again, the focus of this legislation is on the best interests of the child, which will be paramount in out-of-court settlements, as well as judge-delivered settlements.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada for introducing this important piece of legislation.

As she pointed out, the Divorce Act has not been amended in over 20 years, so there was certainly room for improvement. It is only right to support amendments based on principles like the best interests of the child, the fight against family violence and poverty reduction.

I want to pick up on something the minister said at the end of her speech and ask her a question. In her conclusion, she said she hoped that we would support her in promoting this bill. We consulted a number of experts and organizations in our preparations to study Bill C-78. While they heartily welcome the bill, they did see other possible improvements, even though the bill is already 190 pages long.

I would like to know whether the government members who sit on that committee will be open to hearing and supporting the amendments brought forward by members of various parties based on evidence given by the experts who will be appearing before us to discuss possible improvements, in addition to the amendments moved by the minister.

● (1645)

[*English*]

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould: Mr. Speaker, I recognize, acknowledge and appreciate the support my colleague has expressed for Bill C-78. I also recognize and acknowledge there have been many individuals, family law practitioners and others, who have expressed support for this legislation.

Like the hon. member, I too have had a number of discussions about where this piece of legislation could potentially be improved. That said, I hope we all share an understanding that the Divorce Act is outdated and needs to be modernized. It has not been updated for over 20 years.

I am open to hearing how Bill C-78 could be improved. I have received some letters and would be happy to continue to have discussions with all members of the House.

I look forward to this piece of legislation hopefully going to committee so we can do the work that is necessary to make sure that we get it right.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I commend the minister for her work on this legislation.

As she has said, divorce proceedings can be combative and adversarial. Often the children are treated as though they are the spoils of war, with devastating consequences for the whole family.

I welcome the focus of the bill's being on the best interests of the child and the way threats to children and protecting children from harm are given more clarity. The list is not exhaustive, but it is good.

My concern is what the courts do. The minister is familiar, of course, with the bill. Subclause 7.8(2) gives information to the courts to be aware of when they are making orders.

I know two mothers who have suffered the loss of their children because a court did not believe them.

Alison Azer became a friend of mine through the trials and tribulations of her non-custodial ex-husband taking four children out of her reach and secreting them to Iraq, Syria and then other locations. She begged the court not to let her ex-husband have passports for the children. He convinced the court they were only going on vacation to Europe.

Even more tragic is Sarah Cotton's case. I met her at her daughters' funeral. Both of her daughters were killed on Christmas Day. She had tried to convince the court that her non-custodial former partner was not sufficiently stable, and could be a threat to the children. Because he had never shown any signs of possibly hurting them, he was given Christmas Day visitation.

I do not know that this legislation could be improved in this area. There should be a positive obligation on the courts, almost like the precautionary principle. It is difficult because it is adversarial. A former partner might invent claims that the ex-partner represented a threat to the child.

We might want to strengthen the obligations of the court under subclause 7.8(2) to do more than consider whether there is a civil protection order or a child protection order, or likely to be one, and direct the court not just to make inquiries but also to direct it to specific things that it must consider, such as the possibility of a former partner taking children out of the vicinity or out of Canada altogether, or worse, doing serious violence to or killing the children.

● (1650)

Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her commentary and speaking about some personal cases and situations that she is familiar with. I do not believe that there was a specific question.

However, in terms of what we are doing broadly with respect to this piece of legislation, we want to put in as much information as we can to provide the courts and judges with specific factors to consider when they are looking at the best interests of the child. I think one of the primary considerations would be for a judge to listen to the child, in appropriate circumstances, as to where the child wants to go.

We are working, as I indicated, in terms of the international conventions. We are working with the provinces and territories around the protection of the child and how that will assist in terms of enforcement across international jurisdictions. I did hear my colleague on that.

As well, I have heard of individual circumstances and cases that are egregious. Perhaps there is a way we can have a conversation about how that can be addressed. I am not sure in thinking about it right now, but I am happy to continue to have that conversation to make sure that individual children do not, as much as possible, fall through the cracks. Obviously, every case is different, but I am happy to have that conversation to see how we can protect children in the face of violence and being taken out of jurisdictions and the consequences that result from some of those situations.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Order. It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Provencher, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship; the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, National Defence; the hon. member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay, The Environment.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Dufferin—Caledon.

[*English*]

Mr. David Tilson (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House to speak to Bill C-78, which, as has been said by the minister, is an an act to amend the Divorce Act, the Family Orders and Agreements Enforcement Assistance Act, and the Garnishment, Attachment and Pension Diversion Act and to make consequential amendments to another act.

As has been said, it has been 30 years since we have seen substantive amendments to the Divorce Act. In that time, the courts and the family law bar have been moving forward with modernizing divorce proceedings in Canada with updated language and terminology aimed at making the process less adversarial. It is good to see that the government is moving forward with legislation to bring the statute in line with the direction the family law sector has been moving in for several years now. While support for these amendments is by no means universal, they are generally being well received by the family law bar, at least in terms of the research that I have gone through in the response to Bill C-78.

Since its tabling in May, there has been a fairly steady stream of commentary, mostly in the legal press, regarding the bill and most of it has been positive. The bill's focus on updating the language surrounding controversial terms such as custody and access and replacing that with language that places the emphasis on parenting responsibilities, parenting time, parental decision-making, etc., is a positive one, in my view.

The language of the current statute is clearly adversarial and establishes a winner and loser scenario in which one parent wins custody of the child over the other. In the already emotional situation of divorce, this adds to the tension and is clearly not in the best interests of the child. With this change in language, my hope is that, should the bill make it to committee, the ramifications beyond the courts and involved parties with the new terminology will be looked at closely.

While many judges and family law practitioners have been using this less adversarial language for years now, other parties that have less direct involvement in divorce and custody proceedings are still rooted in the 30-year-old terminology this bill seeks to replace. I am thinking of Children's Aid societies, schools, law enforcement and others who may be called to intervene in disputes. They are operating under the existing language of custody and access. How will they react to this new language? Will their own enabling legislation or internal rule sets require changes as a result? How will they adapt? My hope is that the justice committee takes a long and detailed look at these potential rough spots.

The road to this set of reforms has been a while in coming. In 2013, the Action Committee on Access to Justice in Civil and Family Matters, which is known as the Cromwell committee, published its final report calling for meaningful change in the family justice system. Specifically, the committee report called for particular emphasis on increasing the use of consensual dispute resolution methods. It also recommended the language of custody and access be replaced by the language of parental responsibility and contact.

In preparing for this debate, I reviewed some of the case law that is of significant importance to the bill. In particular, I would like to quote a 2015 case from the Court of Appeal of Ontario, known as M v. F, 2015 ONCA, at page 277. This is with respect to the old terminology of custody and access and its tendency to produce a culture of winners and losers.

● (1655)

From paragraphs 38 to 40 of the decision, the appellate justice wrote:

> [38] The Ontario legislation does not require the trial judge to make an order for custody. Section 28(1) (a) of the CLRA is permissive, not mandatory: The court ... by order may grant the custody of or access to the child to one or more persons.
>
> [39] For over twenty years, multi-disciplinary professionals have been urging the courts to move away from the highly charged terminology of "custody" and "access." These words denote that there are winners and losers when it comes to children. They promote an adversarial approach to parenting and do little to benefit the child. The danger of this "winner/loser syndrome" in child custody battles has long been recognized.
>
> [40] It was therefore open to the trial judge to adopt the "parenting plan" proposed by the assessor without awarding "custody." It was also in keeping with the well-recognized view that the word "custody" denotes "winner" so consequently the other parent is the "loser" and this syndrome is not in the best interests of the child.

Therefore, we see in this instance that the words "custody" and "access" have been causing trouble for a long time, and the bill's proposed move away from them should be viewed positively. How that plays out on the ground remains to be seen, of course. Divorce is, by definition, an emotional experience and with children in the mix, reason sometimes escapes the participants.

Another emphasis of the bill is to encourage those involved in divorce proceedings to use alternative dispute resolution mechanisms rather than resort to litigation. Again, I view this as a positive step. Litigation over children is very expensive and potentially very destructive. It is certainly almost never in the best interest of the child. Moving away from litigation and moving towards alternative dispute resolutions such as the use of parenting coordinators, family justice counsellors, mediators or arbitrators will go some distance in protecting children from the fallout of adult litigation.

When choosing to go the litigation route, parents can often lose sight of the fact that their children stand to be adversely affected by the litigation process. Indeed, they can even become weapons used by one or both parties to the litigation, to the great detriment of the child or children. Efforts to protect children against adult litigation are commendable and it is a positive aspect of this proposed legislation.

Another aspect of the bill seeks to establish a framework for the relocation of a child. The bill would establish a shifting burden of proof when one parent wishes to relocate. If the parties have substantially equal parenting time assigned by the court, the relocating party bears the burden of establishing that the relocation is in the best interest of the child. If the child spends the vast majority of their time with one party, the other party must establish that the relocation is not in the best interest of the child. The court retains flexibility to make adjustments to existing orders when determining these arrangements, again, in the best interest of the child.

I mentioned earlier in my comments this afternoon that while the overall reception of the bill has been positive, the reaction has not been universally so. Some critics have argued that the bill's lack of a rebuttable presumption for equal shared parenting as the default position for any divorce negotiation is less than ideal. They point to social science research that suggests that the default position of equal shared parenting leads to better outcomes for children. Of course, equal shared parenting is not always ideal, which is why they suggest that a default position should be rebuttable. The lack of this default position in the bill is a detriment for these critics.

● (1700)

Others have noted that replacing the terms "custody" and "access" with parenting-based terms would not substantially reduce the conflict that can be central in divorce proceedings. Some predict that the fights between parents over custody would, in future, turn into fights over who has "decision-making responsibility", another term in the legislation. They claim that it is inherent in the process. There is clearly some work here for the members of the justice committee, should the bill pass second reading.

I trust my colleagues will seek out the views not only of the family bar but of all those who have an interest in supporting the decision of the courts in divorce matters, as well as experts in research and academia who make this their field of study. This would require a broad range of witnesses who will no doubt have suggestions for improvements to the bill. I would encourage the government side not to reject those suggestions out of hand but to consider them in light of this legislation's more positive, less adversarial approach to divorce proceedings in Canada. There may well be room for improvement here.

In closing, I for one am generally positive about the direction the bill seeks to take and look forward to the deliberations at the committee stage. I am sure they will be enlightening for all members.

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would say to the member opposite that anyone who cites Ontario Court of Appeal case law in this august chamber automatically has my respect. I thank him for the statement he made about the important provisions that are in the legislation.

With respect to the point about the presumption of parenting, it is important to note that in the bill the presumption is that each case should be dealt with individually on a case-by-case basis and there is no presumed equal parenting or shared parenting model.

In light of what we heard from the minister about the fact that 96% of cases involve male parents who are paying female recipients, the fact that we know there are billions of dollars in unpaid support payments across Canada right now, that 60% of cases enrolled in maintenance enforcement programs are in arrears, and the fact that this is gender equality week, could the member opposite offer his perspective on what this would do to significantly address the feminization of poverty in Canada?

● (1705)

Mr. David Tilson: Mr. Speaker, as has been stated, family law has become extremely adversarial. There are terrible stories about how the parties treat each other and the effects of that on the child or children.

On the issue of non-payment, Ontario in particular has a process where collection can be made. Sometimes that has not proven to be successful. All of us could tell of situations where the deadbeat dads have gotten away with something, but on the whole, the purpose of this legislation is to try and deter the system from becoming more adversarial, and if anything, to make the system become less adversarial.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member made reference to the importance of our bringing forward legislation at this time. After listening to the minister, I am sure those following the debate would be quite encouraged to see that what I and many constituents believe are outdated laws are being changed. That leads to the matter itself of how important it is to, at the very least, recognize this is a positive step forward, and it would be a good thing to see the bill ultimately go to committee.

I am not too sure where the Conservatives stand on the issue. Do they see proposing a number of changes? Are they thinking of making some specific changes or is it a matter of waiting to see what happens at committee?

Mr. David Tilson: Mr. Speaker, I think the member is going to have to wait and see how the debate goes in the House and the issues that are going to be raised at committee. There are many experts, such as people in the family bar, the police, Children's Aid Society, and the list goes on and on, who I know will want to make representations.

Again, my view is that the bill is making the process less adversarial. There are lawyers, including my wife, whose entire practice is family law. I am told that almost 50% of the population have gone through some form of separation or divorce proceedings that involve children. The system cries out for change. It has been 30 years since the Divorce Act has been amended, and I congratulate the government for bringing the bill forward at this time.

Mr. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the member to address the issue of poverty, in particular child poverty and women's poverty, in light of certain and important aspects that are in the bill.

One, we are streamlining processes related to family support. Two, we are ensuring that different parts of government are talking to one another, allowing the release of information from the CRA to help establish, vary and enforce family support. Three, we are ensuring that the provision in the 2007 child support convention is implemented which provides a low-cost and efficient way for people to get family support across international borders.

In light of the member opposite's entire family involvement in this matter, I wonder if he could provide us with his views about those important provisions and how they relate to addressing child poverty.

Mr. David Tilson: Mr. Speaker, as we can well imagine, when couples who have children separate, their joint income is split in half and it causes poverty in many cases. People cannot live the life that they used to live. In many cases, it is women who suffer. The statistics show that more women suffer than men, but there are some men who suffer as well. It is not all women who have this problem.

That is going to reveal itself. I hope the bill passes and goes to committee where some of these issues will be brought forward.

The issue of crossing a border, people taking children out of a jurisdiction, is referred to in the legislation. I know there will be a considerable amount of time spent at committee dealing with that as well.

● (1710)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to Bill C-78, an act to amend the Divorce Act.

Let me begin by saying that we will support this bill, which makes substantial changes to the existing Divorce Act. The NDP supports the objectives set forth in this family justice bill, especially when it comes to promoting the best interests of the child and taking family violence into account in making parenting arrangements.

It has been 20 years since this law was last amended, and even though this bill was unexpected, I have to say that changes to the Divorce Act are long overdue. My colleagues and I have examined this 190-page bill carefully, and we are pleased to see that the child's best interests really are paramount.

I was also very pleased to hear the Minister of Justice say that this bill will apply on a case-by-case basis because every divorce is different, every situation is different, and every couple has their own story.

We believe we must continue to study this bill, consulting experts and witnesses, in order to make improvements, because there is always room for improvement, and we have some suggestions for the government. We believe that by continuing to study this bill and consulting experts, we will get an accurate perspective on this bill.

We spoke with senior law professors, lawyers, divorced parents, and other experts, and we kept hearing the same thing. We will have to see how this law is enforced by judges. Manitoba lawyer Lawrence Pinsky shared this perspective. In a CBC interview, he said that it was too early to measure the bill's overall impact. Mr. Pinsky also said that it will all depend on how judges interpret the bill, and we agree with this.

About the parenting plan provisions in the bill, according to a senior professor at the University of Ottawa Faculty of Law, negotiating a parenting plan is certainly a good idea, provided that a plan is not systematically imposed. She said that this provision should not prevent an individual from obtaining a court order in difficult-to-negotiate cases or cases involving violence, when negotiation is not possible.

She said that the addition of criteria to better define the interests of the child essentially codifies the criteria to be considered in jurisprudence. However, we must keep the interests of the child front and centre, in every case, to make sure that the list does not become a simple checklist without any further consideration. We must always remember that this list is not and cannot be exhaustive.

We also believe that the best interest of the child should be considered at all times. In that sense, we would like to see a provision on representation for the child. We suggest that it be made a right under the law that the child be represented by their own lawyer and that services and resources be made available to the child if needed. When I talk about resources I mean psychological support because, as we all know, a divorce causes turmoil in family life and we believe that the child at the centre of the dispute should be represented so that their best interests are also brought forward.

When this bill was introduced in the last session, the government said that the court should also take children's points of view and preferences into account when it hands down its ruling. The children need to be given the means to express their points of view, preferences, fears, and feelings. We sincerely hope to put the child at the centre of this entire process and ensure that the child's voice is also heard, taken into account, and respected.

In the same vein, former Senator Landon Pearson said:

> When their parents separate, children's lives are changed forever. The responsibility of parents and family members as well as the professionals who engage with them, is to make that change as smooth as possible. Children have the right to be looked after, and to be protected from violence and undue emotional stress. They also have the right to maintain relationships that are important to them and to have their own voices heard. Only when these and all the other rights that are guaranteed to them by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child are respected, will children be able to accept and adjust well to the new circumstances in which they find themselves.

● (1715)

Those wise words highlight how important it is to protect children and, above all, allow them to express their emotions and share their opinions. We therefore think it is also important to ensure that children have fair representation when needed. Members will recall that Landon Carter Pearson was appointed to the Senate in 1994 and retired in 2005. We have been talking about this for a very long time. Senator Pearson served as vice-chair of the Standing Committee on Human Rights.

Families' access to fair and equitable representation is sometimes unduly limited, and court solutions for family support in the context of shared custody are rarely fair, proportional or economic.

Consider the example of someone fleeing a situation of abuse, control or domestic violence. Those individuals often simply run away from the conflict by avoiding contact with the other parent. As a result of these kinds of situations and changing needs, many children never receive—and some parents never pay—the support payments they are entitled to.

The provisions set out in Bill C-78 are a step in the right direction, but the bill might not adequately ensure that support payments are made in shared custody situations.

In that regard, lawyer Jenny Woodruff indicated that it would have been a good idea for Bill C-78 to ensure that parents are paid appropriate child support, but that the bill does not address that issue.

It is important to ensure that the amounts paid are appropriate. Since the government claims that one of the purposes of Bill C-78 is to reduce child poverty, this shortcoming should be remedied in the interests of the child's well-being and in order to ensure that parents who are in a situation like the one I just described can obtain the child support payments their children are entitled to.

We are pleased that one of the changes this bill makes is to give the government the ability to share with and transmit to provincial entities more tax information on parents who refuse to disclose their income.

Right now, the Canada Revenue Agency can only transmit to the courts basic information such as the parent's name, address and employer. This measure will make it possible to fully assess the situation of a parent who may be trying to avoid paying child support. It is important to remember that, although the Divorce Act is a federal law that falls under the jurisdiction of our Parliament, the provinces are the ones responsible for administering and enforcing child support orders. We must therefore give the provinces our full support so that they can ensure that parents are making child support payments.

I would also like to mention that this bill seeks to better regulate the relocation of parents and children following a divorce, by requiring one parent to inform the other if he or she wants to move and by giving the courts criteria to help them determine whether the relocation is in the best interests of the child and should be allowed.

It is definitely a good idea, but we need to proceed with caution when making such a decision. I will come back to that because this was pointed out by an organization in my riding. I believe it is important to recognize the work of Céline Coulombe from La Clé sur la porte, a shelter for women and children who are victims of violence. Ms. Coulombe has extensive expertise in working with women facing domestic violence. She stated that this bill does establish important guidelines and contributes its share of necessary measures, but we must be cautious and discerning when dealing with such delicate matters as harassment and domestic violence.

Quite often, when these situations arise, the victim tries to flee from the abuser by going to another city, or even another province. We must ensure that, in these cases, the courts will exercise diligence and discretion in order to definitely protect the child and the victim.

I wanted to point that out because in the bill, it says:

> A person who has parenting time or decision-making responsibility in respect of a child of the marriage and who intends to change their place of residence or that of the child shall notify any other person who has parenting time, decision-making responsibility or contact under a contact order in respect of that child of their intention.

The bill also says:

> In considering the impact of any family violence...the court shall take the following into account:
>
> (a) the nature, seriousness and frequency of the family violence and when it occurred;

That is fairly subjective. I realize that this bill leaves everything up to the courts, but we must take great care to ensure the safety of the child and the parent fleeing a dangerous situation.

● (1720)

We must be very vigilant.

I am proud of the organizations in my riding that do amazing work every day with people going through divorce and women who are victims of domestic violence. Le Petit pont is a community organization in Saint-Hyacinthe and Longueuil that helps create and maintain parent-child bonds in a neutral, family-friendly, harmonious space for families undergoing separation or conflict. The organization's priority is the child's best interests, including his or her physical and psychological safety.

Le Petit pont operates outside of the parents' home to ensure neutrality and fair, professional treatment for everyone involved. Services include supervision of parents and children during visitation as well as information and support for families. The organization strives to create a home-like environment. Its facilities are suitable for people of all ages and enable people to get into a daily routine and reduce the stress associated with supervision.

We consulted Le Petit pont about Bill C-78, and I just want to acknowledge the amazing work done by Martin Tessier, the executive director, who gave us the benefit of his wisdom. First, he told us his organization believes the interests of the child are paramount. He said that, as we discussed, it would be a good idea for marriage documents to include provisions setting out what would happen in the event of a separation, to clarify any issues that are important to the spouses. These important decisions need to be made while the couple is getting along, rather than waiting until after the relationship breaks down or becomes hostile. For example, provisions could be inserted covering elements like custody, visitation, access rights, pensions, division of property, relocation and the children's education.

Lastly, he said that like married couples, common-law partners should draw up a cohabitation agreement, a will, and a financial plan that covers what will happen if they separate. Mr. Tessier said that the most important thing is to raise public awareness of the many aspects people often overlook, like legislation, agreements and statistics. These are all very fair comments. I want to thank Mr. Tessier for his insightful recommendations and suggestions.

In my riding, we are lucky enough to be able to count on the professionalism of La Clé sur la porte, a shelter organization that has been taking in women from across Quebec for 37 years, with locations in Saint-Hyacinthe, Acton Vale and Beloeil. It is a women's shelter and support centre for victims of domestic violence and their children. Since 1981, it has welcomed over 4,000 women and as many children. I think it is imperative that we consult organizations like these when studying the bill before us today, because they have special expertise and an invaluable perspective.

The primary focus of La Clé sur la porte is the safety of the women and children. As soon as clients come through the doors of the shelter, they receive a warm welcome in a trusting, respectful and supportive environment. The clients are safe there. The caseworkers listen to them, support them, and help them in their decisions. Post-shelter assistance is also available from the organization to ensure that the women return to their normal lives under the best conditions.

Members of the organization also work on prevention and awareness raising. They visit high schools, where they give workshops on abusive relationships. They also give talks on domestic violence to social, community and educational organizations and institutions or other interested groups.

I had a discussion with Céline Coulombe, the coordinator at La Clé sur la porte. She voiced some concerns over the bill that I wish to share with the House. The first has to do with family mediation. The bill before us includes some elements to encourage parents to use other avenues than the courts, including family dispute resolution and mediation. Obviously, this alternative is a good idea for reducing court backlogs, but this method can be risky for victims in cases of domestic violence.

● (1725)

Ms. Coulombe told me that advocacy groups had fought for, and eventually won, the right for victims to opt out. This right should not be disputed. Once again, we must be cautious.

La Clé sur la porte and Ms. Coulombe expressed concerns about a second aspect, which is the requirement that a parent give notice of relocation to the other parent, even in the case of criminal proceedings, when the abuser is subject to a no-contact order. The abuser absolutely must not know where the victim is living. We all know that even if the courts issue a no-contact order, victims must often still take additional steps to keep themselves and their children safe.

Because the courts do not communicate, criminal judgments are often not taken into account when access to the children is being decided.

Unfortunately, my riding has seen some cases recently where women have been killed, or at risk of being killed, when they dropped their child off with their former husband. One such situation is one too many. We must be cautious and make sure that women and children are protected.

Lastly, the coordinator for La Clé sur la porte emphasized that the legislation focuses on the traumatic impact that divorce can have on children, and rightly so, but we also need to bear in mind that living in fear in a home fraught with violence is far more traumatic for a child. In addition, violence unfortunately does not usually end on the day of the separation or the day a court decision is handed down. Forcing victims to take part in dispute resolution or mediation sessions can put them in danger.

I am very familiar with La Clé sur la porte, as I used to work there. Back then, I was a recently divorced single parent. Fortunately, I never experienced violence.

I worked nights, and every night I was at La Clé sur la porte, I met women who suffered from insomnia. Those women would come and talk to me and share what they had been through. What I found most moving when I listened to their stories was the realization that it could happen to any one of us. Many of them had not seen it coming and had wound up in that situation through no fault of their own.

As we work to clarify the divorce legislation, it is important to remember that it applies to people who are at a vulnerable point in their lives. We need to make sure that we put in place all the necessary measures to keep them safe and to give their children access to the resources they are entitled to.

In divorce cases, each parent often has his or her own lawyer. However, many witnesses asked us to think about implementing measures that would support the provinces and ensure that, in some situations, the child gets a lawyer. The child's lawyer would be there simply to examine the situation and make sure that the child's interests are being protected under the agreement that is reached.

This would be applied in the provinces, so we would have to ensure that they have the necessary resources to continue to support organizations such as Le Petit pont and La Clé sur la porte.

I am reaching out to the government on this. As the critic for families, children and social development, I have the best interests of children at heart. I want to ensure that the courts have the tools they need. I want to ensure that appropriate child support payments are made. I want to ensure that victims of any form of domestic violence and their children are protected. I want to ensure that the children at the centre of these disputes have the opportunity to be heard, if they so choose, and that they get the support they need.

I am pleased to have had the opportunity to share with the House our recommendations and concerns regarding this bill.

● (1730)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The hon. member will have 10 minutes for questions and comments when the House resumes debate on this bill.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

BILLS OF EXCHANGE ACT

The House resumed from September 24, 2018, consideration of the motion that Bill C-369, an act to amend the Bills of Exchange Act, the Interpretation Act and the Canada Labour Code (National Indigenous Peoples Day), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-369 under private members' business.

Call in the members.

● (1810)

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 888)

YEAS

Members

Aldag
Amos
Angus
Ashton
Bagnell
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bennett
Bittle
Blair
Boissonnault
Boulerice
Bratina
Brison
Caesar-Chavannes
Caron
Casey (Charlottetown)
Chen
Cormier
Dabrusin
Davies
Dhaliwal
Donnelly
Dubé
Duclos
Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dusseault
Dzerowicz
Ehsassi
Ellis
Eyking
Fergus
Finnigan
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Fraser (Central Nova)
Fuhr
Garrison
Gill
Goodale
Graham
Hardcastle
Hébert
Hogg
Housefather
Hutchings
Jolibois
Jordan
Julian
Khera
Lametti
Lapointe
Laverdière
Leboutihllier
Leslie
Lightbound
Long
Ludwig
MacGregor
Malcolmson
Masse (Windsor West)
Mathyssen
May (Saanich — Gulf Islands)
McDonald
McKay
McLeod (Northwest Territories)
Mendicino
Miller (Ville Marie — Le Sud-Ouest — Île des Soeurs)
Monsef
Moore
Morrissey
Nantel
Alghabra
Anandasangaree
Arya
Ayoub
Bains
Baylis
Beech
Benson
Blaikie
Blaney (North Island — Powell River)
Bossio
Boutin-Sweet
Breton
Bruneau
Cannings
Casey (Cumberland — Colchester)
Chagger
Christopherson
Cuzner
Damoff
DeCourcey
Dhillon
Drouin
Dubourg
Duguid
Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona)
Duvall
Easter
El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith
Eyolfson
Fillmore
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser (West Nova)
Fry
Garneau
Gerretsen
Goldsmith-Jones
Gould
Grewal
Harvey
Hehr
Holland
Hughes
Johns
Jones
Jowhari
Khalid
Kwan
Lamoureux
Lauzon (Argenteuil — La Petite-Nation)
LeBlanc
Lefebvre
Levitt
Lockhart
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney
Massé (Avignon — La Mitis — Matane — Matapédia)
May (Cambridge)
McCrimmon
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam — Port Coquitlam)
Mendès
Mihychuk
Moreau
Murray
Nault
Ng
Oliphant
O'Regan
Pauzé
Peterson
Poissant
Ramsey
Ratansi
Rodriguez
Romanado
Rumny
Saganash
Saini
Sangha
Sarai
Schiefke
Serré
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simms
Sorbara
Ste-Marie
Tabbara
Tassi
Trudel
Vandenbeld
Virani
Whalen
Wrzesnewskyj
Young
O'Connell
Oliver
Ouellette
Peschisolido
Picard
Quach
Rankin
Robillard
Rogers
Rudd
Rusnak
Sahota
Sajjan
Samsoucy
Scarpaleggia
Schulte
Shanahan
Sidhu (Mission — Matsqui — Fraser Canyon)
Sikand
Sohi
Spengemann
Sterki
Tan
Thériault
Vandal
Vaughan
Weir
Wilkinson
Yip
Zahid — 202

NAYS

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Deltell
Doherty
Falk (Battlefords — Lloydminster)
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Motz
Nuttall
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Anderson
Barlow
Bergen
Berthold
Blaney (Bellechasse — Les Etchemins — Lévis)
Calkins
Chong
Cooper
Diotte
Eglinski
Falk (Provencher)
Gallant
Gladu
Gourde
Hoback
Kent
Kusie
Lloyd
Lukiwski
Maguire
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLeod (Kamloops — Thompson — Cariboo)
Nater
Obhrai
Rayes
Rempel
Scheer
Shields
Sorenson
Strahl
Sweet
Trost
Vecchio
Wagantall
Warkentin
Webber
Yurdiga

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: It being 6:12 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

* * *

MULTICULTURALISM ACT

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ) moved that Bill C-393, An Act to amend the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (non-application in Quebec), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise to speak to this important bill, very pleased to table it on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, and very pleased to kick off the debate we need to have on multiculturalism and its impact on Quebec.

This debate follows up on the supposed recognition of the Quebec nation by this Parliament. I know that the Prime Minister does not believe in it and that he wants to make Canada the first postnational state in the world, which means that Quebec's national identity would disappear. That is completely ridiculous.

The Quebec nation is the community to which we belong, the group with which we identify and the one we are discussing in order to decide how our society is to be organized. A nation is a special place where political decisions can be made and, therefore, recognizing a nation means recognizing a political entity with legitimate political rights and aspirations.

By recognizing the Quebec nation, the House of Commons recognized, perhaps unwillingly, the right of Quebeckers to control the social, economic and cultural development of Quebec themselves.

By stating that the Quebec nation is composed of all residents of Quebec, regardless of their origin or mother tongue or the region where they live, the federal government recognized that the Quebec nation has a clear geographic base made up of all of the territory of Quebec.

In short, recognition of the Quebec nation also means recognition of the legitimacy of Quebec's repeated demands that Quebeckers have the powers and resources that are needed in order to develop their own society.

I think it is worth noting that Quebec has never needed Ottawa in order to be a nation and unanimously declare its nationhood.

On October 30, 2003, the National Assembly of Quebec unanimously passed the following motion:

> THAT the National Assembly reaffirm that the people of Quebec form a nation.

The motion does not say that the people of Quebec form a nation if Canada remains as it is, or that Quebec is a nation if it opts for sovereignty. It says that the people of Quebec form a nation, period. There is a reason why the National Assembly specified, repeated and reaffirmed the existence of the nation of Quebec. In fact, this resolution echoes what governments of Quebec have been saying for decades. Daniel Johnson Sr. said in February 1968:

> The Constitution should not have as its sole purpose to federate territories, but also to associate in equality two linguistic and cultural communities, two founding peoples, two societies, two nations...

René Lévesque said in June 1980:

> Canada is composed of two equal nations; Quebec is the home and the heart of one of those nations and, as it possesses all the attributes of a distinct national community, it has an inalienable right to self-determination. This right to control its own national destiny is the most fundamental right that Quebec society has.

Quebec has long been a nation, both before and after Canada was formed. That is a reality that none of the federalist parties has ever had the courage to enshrine in the Constitution.

As Gilles Duceppe said on November 22, 2006:

> I would never insist that Quebeckers form a nation only on the condition that they have a country, nor would I ever accept that we could be recognized as a nation only on the condition that we stay in Canada.
>
> ...
>
> We are a nation because we are what we are, no matter which future we choose.

That is why the Quebec nation must have all the tools it needs to thrive and define itself.

Accordingly, I included the following preamble in the bill:

> Whereas Quebecers form a nation and therefore possess all the tools needed to define their identity and protect their common values, including as regards the protection of the French language, the separation of church and state and gender equality;

I sincerely hope that the House will unanimously support this preamble.

That being said, Quebec is the only nation of its kind in the world. It is a nation inhabited by 8 million francophones in a continent of almost 400 million anglophones. Demographically speaking, we should have disappeared over time. Quebec is a true historic anomaly, and it must have all the tools it needs to carry on, starting with its independence. The federal government could have been an ally in the phenomenon of Quebec, or what I would even go so far as to call the miracle of Quebec.

● (1815)

Ottawa could have used its authority to allow Quebec's distinct identity to develop. Members will recall the Meech Lake-Charlottetown fiasco. Instead, Ottawa is hindering Quebec and undermining Quebec's efforts to create a unifying culture.

One of Ottawa's worst attacks on the Quebec nation, on what we are collectively, is multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is undermining the Quebec phenomenon and the existence of a common culture.

If we go to the Government of Canada website, under the heading "Canadian identity and society" it states that multiculturalism "ensur [es] that all citizens keep their identities, take pride in their ancestry". In other words, integration is pointless.

In Quebec, multiculturalism is not about a policy of integration, but rather a policy of disintegration. It is a policy that creates a fragmented society inhabited by people from many different cultures, rather than fostering the development of a society that integrates newcomers to enrich a common culture.

The reality is that multiculturalism rejects the idea of a common culture by encouraging multiple cultures to coexist. Although it is defined as a model for integrating newcomers, in reality it promotes coexistence driven by indifference, or perhaps tolerance, rather than respect for difference. This inevitably leads to ghettoization.

Concerned that multiculturalism divides society into a multitude of solitudes, Quebec has always rejected the Canadian approach, especially since it trivializes Quebec's position within Canada and refutes the existence of the Quebec nation.

In 1971, Robert Bourassa stated in a letter to Pierre Elliott Trudeau that "that notion hardly seems compatible with Quebec's reality". That was true 50 years ago and remains true today.

Quebec focuses on integration. Cultural plurality, or cultural diversity, is something to be shared. Getting to know one another better, talking to one another more and building our society together, that is the Quebecois approach. To do that, we have to be on the same wavelength. That is why, in Quebec, we ask immigrants to recognize the French fact, to know the French language, to learn it, and to recognize that it is the language of our common space. That is why Quebec insists on the need to respect the cornerstones of Quebec society, such as the separation of church and state, gender equality, and the existence of an historic cultural heritage. That heritage is multicultural, not multiculturalist.

Before 2003, there was even talk of a civil pact. The Quebec model of integration goes beyond simple citizenship designed to promote the development and peaceful coexistence of cultural minorities in a vacuum by bringing these minorities to enter the symbolic and institutional space occupied by the nation. In other words, contrary to Canada's approach, which talks about preserving the identity of minorities without integration, Quebec's approach supports integration based on the learning of the French language, the official language and language common to the citizenry, and on the adherence to a set of fundamental principles.

According to the Quebec department of immigration and cultural communities:

> An intercultural society's challenge is a collective one: to ensure harmony by maintaining and adopting the values and principles of action that unite all citizens. This challenge is met with respect for individual, cultural and religious differences.

There is no better example to illustrate the difference between Canada's approach and Quebec's approach.

> Québec is a French-speaking, democratic and pluralist society based on the rule of law, which means that everyone has the same value and dignity as well as the same right to protection under the law.
>
> Knowledge and respect for the values of Québec society are necessary for adapting to your new environment and fully participating in it.

Integration is achieved through full participation, which multiculturalism inhibits.

In a February 2008 article in Le Monde diplomatique, Louise Beaudoin explained why the Quebec integration model and the Canadian one are incompatible:

● (1820)

For nearly 30 years, Canada and Quebec have had two different approaches to integration. The federal multiculturalism policy, which is modelled on the British approach, promotes cultural diversity based on ethnicity and encourages people to seek out their own community of origin. In contrast, Quebec opted for a model based on interculturalism, a cultural exchange within the framework of the common values of a pluralistic nation with a francophone majority. These two clearly conflicting visions are irreconcilable.

This is confusing to newcomers. They see Quebec as a French-speaking nation that exists within a bilingual country that promotes bilingualism. It prides itself on an approach to welcoming and integrating newcomers that focuses on the importance of certain basic values and upholds French as the language of the people. This conflicts with the definition of a Canada that presents itself as bilingual and multicultural.

In its preliminary submission to the Bouchard-Taylor Commission, the Conseil des relations interculturelles du Québec highlighted this confusion:

> However, the efforts made by the Government of Quebec to define and promote its own model of integration came up against the ideology of multiculturalism, which was sometimes interpreted by certain groups as the possibility of living one's own culture according to the rationale of separate development....the ideological way of thinking that emerged in the 1970s, which presented society as a mosaic of cultures, has since been encouraging certain groups to develop beliefs that clash with Quebec's vision.

People arriving in Quebec receive two contradictory messages. Instead of laying blame, as some are wont to do, the Bloc Québécois thinks it would be better to make the messages clearer. In their February 8, 2007, manifesto entitled "En finir avec le multiculturalisme", Quebec intellectuals Charles Courtois, Dominic Courtois, Robert Laplante, Danic Parenteau and Guillaume Rousseau stated the following:

> We think that Quebeckers want to see the principles of equality and public secularism affirmed, putting the emphasis on a common culture and providing inspiration for the principles of integration and the methods of dispute resolution. The Charter of the French Language already does this in part, but in order to do so fully, Quebec needs to have its own citizenship....For now, new Quebeckers are sworn in as new Canadian citizens without being encouraged to integrate into the Quebec nation. This is not what inclusion means to Quebec.

This is why it is important for Quebec to have maximum flexibility in enforcing its own citizenship and integration policy. We believe that Quebec will truly be free only once it becomes independent. This will put an end to the confusing messages. Immigrants who choose Quebec will no longer come to a Canadian province, but will come to a francophone country. Until then, however, Quebec must be exempt from the scope of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act. That is why I introduced this bill.

Quebec needs freedom to integrate newcomers. Every year, Quebec welcomes approximately 50,000 immigrants, and this does not include refugees. We must have access to all the tools we need to integrate them and help them integrate in Quebec.

The Prime Minister's version of multiculturalism has completely lost touch with the Quebec reality. He does not see a Quebec nation and does not think that Quebec should decide how its residents should coexist. He certainly does not want nations around the world seeing who we are, hearing our voice, and relating to our desire to carve out our own place in the world and reach out to people around the world, in a spirit of global humanism.

I urge everyone who values the interests of Quebec, Quebec culture, and Quebec identity, to support my bill, which will allow Quebec to set its own integration model. Quebec should be making its own decisions about interculturalism, cultural convergence and common culture. These decisions should not be left to a government that thinks that openness means putting on a costume when you take an international trip.

● (1825)

Mr. Frank Baylis (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a hard time imagining myself in the Quebec described by my colleague.

First off, the Quebec I know welcomes all kinds of cultures. Quebec is home to francophones from the Caribbean, Haiti, Africa and, of course, France. I have always thought of my province, Quebec, as a welcoming place for everyone. Newcomers not only integrate, they become an integral part of Quebec's economic, cultural and artistic society.

I am having a really hard time understanding why my colleague does not see all these people as an asset for Quebec as a whole. Could he explain why?

Mr. Luc Thériault: Mr. Speaker, I am a little taken aback by my colleague's comments. With all due respect, I do not think he understood my speech at all. What I said was that the multiculturalism model may work for the rest of Canada, but it is not the ideal model for Quebec.

My colleague, who belongs to a federalist party that has never recognized the Quebec nation, says he supports diversity, but that has nothing to do with multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is a policy that prevents Quebec from fully integrating newcomers because of an inherent contradiction: multiculturalism seeks to quash the Quebec difference while denying that a difference even exists.

Here, we support recognizing and respecting all differences, not just tolerating them. Canada and my colleague's party only tolerate the presence of the Quebec nation within Canada.

● (1830)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would disagree with my colleague and friend across the way. My ancestors and family are rooted in Quebec. Quebec is a very important aspect of my personal heritage. It is a province of which I am very proud.

I live in Winnipeg's north end. I believe that Canada's greatest strength is our diversity and that the people who live in Quebec are very proud of their heritage. It is a heritage that is appreciated in every region of the country.

Quebec as a whole is a welcoming and loving province, with great prosperity. It continues to support Canadian society in an array of areas, just like every other province, especially by contributing through its cultural activities. Other regions of Canada have so much to learn from Quebec.

Does my friend across the way not recognize that many people across this land have roots in Quebec and are very proud of their heritage, individuals like me? I often will talk about my family and where it comes from.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault: Mr. Speaker, if my distinguished colleague were so proud of his Quebec roots, he would not be the slightest bit opposed to including the Quebec nation in Canada's Constitution. That is what should be done at a minimum, because the Quebec nation, according to every Quebec premier I cited earlier, is a founding nation of this country.

Multiculturalism seeks to obscure Quebec's distinct nature and to reduce the nation to one ethnicity among many. That is not how Quebec, as a distinct nation and a minority, can integrate newcomers. The most renowned English Canadian experts on multiculturalism say that only a majority can carry out natural integration. We are a minority.

The 1982 Constitution even usurped our minority status, in addition to obscuring our right to be a nation. When we say that we support cultural diversity, we should at least agree to include the Quebec nation in the Canadian Constitution. I am challenging my colleague. We could then talk about being proud of our origins.

[*English*]

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am rising today to address Bill C-393, an act to amend the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (non-application in Quebec).

It is well known that Canada is one of the most diverse countries in the world. Our country is a place where indigenous peoples, including first nations, Inuit and Métis, live alongside people including refugees from all corners of the globe who have chosen to make their lives in Canada as well as with long-standing Canadian citizens.

Ours is a land of many faiths, many languages and many cultures. It is a place where Muslims, Sikhs, Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, Christians and members of numerous other religious groups live in harmony. It is home to proud francophone and anglophone traditions and communities and to native speakers of an array of indigenous languages, such as Mi'kmaq, Inuktitut, Ojibway, Cree and many others. Millions of other individuals have a mother tongue that is neither French nor English in Canada.

Canada's capacity to prosper and grow within the context of this diversity is the result of a commitment we have made to respect and protect our differences. As a result of this commitment, Canada has developed a broad and evolving legislative and policy framework that supports various elements of diversity and inclusion, including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Canadian Human Rights Act, the Employment Equity Act, the Official Languages Act, and the Canadian Multiculturalism Act.

I would like to remind the House that Canada's federal multiculturalism policy was adopted in 1971 following the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. Significantly, it recognizes the French and English languages on equal terms.

In 1982, with the repatriation of the Canadian Constitution, the Government of Canada reaffirmed the value of multiculturalism in section 27 of the charter, which refers to the "preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians."

In 1988, the Canadian multiculturalism policy was enshrined in the Canadian Multiculturalism Act. The Canadian Multiculturalism Act gives the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism the mandate to develop and deliver programs and practices, which, among other things, will "recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism is a fundamental characteristic of the Canadian heritage" and Canadian identity. The act promotes "the full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins in the continuing evolution and shaping of all aspects of Canadian society" and assists "in the elimination of any barrier to that participation."

Other Canadian jurisdictions have also adopted policies that promote, preserve and protect diversity and foster inclusion. Overall, the protection of equality rights is an underlying objective of these provincial and territorial laws, and some are supported by specific funding programs.

Quebec, for example, promotes and emphasizes interculturalism as an approach to integration and cross-cultural understanding. As we might expect, Quebec's approach to interculturalism proposes a model of integration that aims to ensure, and places priority on, the continuity of the francophone identity and culture while respecting minority cultures and diversity.

Both multiculturalism and interculturalism place a high degree of importance on integration and respect for common civic and democratic values, and both have been invaluable to Canada's social fabric since the 1970s. I believe strongly that Canada's federal multiculturalism policy is flexible enough to allow for their co-existence.

We should be mindful that Bill C-393's passage could undermine the application of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in Quebec, given that section 27 of the charter officially refers to multiculturalism as a Canadian value.

Our country continues to become even more diverse. I highlight our diversity today not simply to reiterate well-known facts about our multicultural society but to emphasize that our country has benefited immensely from the increasing diversity we have experienced over centuries. Our diversity is a leading source of creativity and innovation that fuels sustainable economic growth. Our diversity generates creativity by ensuring a variety of thoughts, experiences and perspectives. This is key to generating the out-of-the-box thinking and experimentation that is foundational to our creative economy.

Even as we move toward a more diverse and inclusive society, there is a considerable amount of evidence on the persistence of racism and discrimination in Canadian society. The proposed amendments to the act could reduce the government's legal authorities to disburse funding for community support, multiculturalism and anti-racism initiatives in Quebec.

● (1835)

It is important for all of us in this nation of diversity to continue to foster an environment where the multicultural heritage of all Canadians is valued.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-393 was introduced in February by the hon. member for Montcalm.

The bill seeks to have Quebec opt out of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act. I must admit that I was not exactly excited about the idea when I first read the bill.

Why would Quebec want to opt out of legislation that is so inclusive and positive? Why reject legislation that celebrates, protects and promotes our culture?

That line of questioning led me to do some research. I already knew about the existence of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, which became law more than 30 years ago. I was also aware of some of its virtues. My research did help me learn more about the subtleties of this legislation.

I did my homework and I can say that I am no more excited about Bill C-393 than I was back in February.

I can say that the 30-year old Canadian Multiculturalism Act has aged well. It is not perfect. Can we improve on it? We certainly could if we set our minds to it. However, it has aged well. It is still current and relevant.

Let me provide some examples.

It seeks to recognize the importance of preserving and enhancing the multicultural heritage of Canadians.

It seeks to recognize the rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada.

It seeks to reflect the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society and acknowledge the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage.

It seeks to recognize that multiculturalism is a fundamental characteristic of the Canadian heritage and identity and that it provides an invaluable resource in the shaping of our country's future.

It seeks to promote the full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins in the continuing evolution and shaping of all aspects of Canadian society.

It seeks to recognize the existence of communities whose members share common origin and their historic contribution to our big, beautiful country, and, especially enhance their development.

It seeks to encourage and assists the social, cultural, economic and political institutions of Canada to be both respectful and inclusive of Canada's multicultural character.

It seeks to foster the recognition and appreciation of the diverse cultures of our country.

It seeks to advance multiculturalism throughout Canada in harmony with the national commitment to the official languages of Canada, English and French, which are great assets to our country.

The list goes on and on. I repeat: who would want to opt out of this cultural policy?

I can think of absolutely no good reason to do so. In fact, I think it is very important for all Canadians to opt in.

We were not born yesterday. We know what drives the party that introduced this bill. Its only goal is to further isolate Quebeckers, even though they have so much to offer the rest of the country and, indeed, the rest of the world.

The Conservative Party knows a bit about that. Twelve years ago, we recognized Quebec as a nation here in the House. We enabled Quebec to get a seat at UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, a great global institution.

Quebec, like every one of this country's provinces, is unique. Everyone knows that.

Canada would not be the country it is today without Quebec's uniqueness as a province and a region. From the Pacific Ocean to the Canadian Prairies, from the Great Lakes and the Appalachians to the Atlantic Ocean and the Far North, Canada is as big as it is diverse.

The Canadian Multiculturalism Act is inclusive. It creates space for all people to express themselves freely. It is in no way restrictive.

It says right there in black and white that the minister can enter into an agreement or arrangement with any province respecting the implementation of its cultural policy.

● (1840)

Under a Conservative government, we repeatedly demonstrated that we were open to giving the provinces a great deal of discretion, particularly when it came to multiculturalism. We could also talk about all the discussions that took place in Quebec and the commitments and arrangements made regarding immigration issues. Could we have done more? I repeat, yes, of course. More work has to be done on this, and governments can move things forward. Perhaps people are feeling frustrated by the current government, but we have no control over that at the moment. Let's talk again in 2019.

There is no need for anyone to opt out of that act. To repeat the purpose of Bill C-393, it seeks to amend the Canadian Multiculturalism Act so it does not apply in Quebec.

I am confident that that is not what Quebeckers want. In fact, I personally spent the last few months travelling all over Quebec with my colleagues and my leader, as we toured extensively to hear from Quebeckers. The tour is continuing this fall. We met with hundreds of people from all regions of Quebec. I met people in love with the belle province, passionate Canadians, proud members of first nations, local artisans, forward-thinking entrepreneurs, really passionate people from all over the province.

These precious moments that I shared with them gave me the opportunity to see just how different each region of Quebec and each region of our country really is. Every community that I visited was unique, particularly from a cultural standpoint. What struck me the most during our tour is how welcoming people are. They are proud to show off their part of the country. They are proud to share what makes them unique. They were very open and showed us what they can bring to Quebec, Canada and the entire world. There are some extraordinary success stories in Quebec that are making waves around the world. These people may not know it, but they are helping to make a name for our beautiful country.

What I saw from the very start of our tour was not people who wanted to cut themselves off from the rest of the country or even do away with the laws we have to promote and defend our identity and our multiculturalism. Instead, I felt their deep desire to tell the rest of the world about what makes them so unique. That is exactly what the existing legislation does. It makes it possible to implement measures and policies, and to call upon each of our institutions to help our regions, our provinces, and our country grow.

The bill's sponsor may tell us that Quebec needs to be able to manage its own multicultural policy. However, I can confirm that Quebec already has full authority to do that, especially since the Conservative Party of Canada recognized that it has this right.

Maybe those who proposed this bill will say that the provinces' powers are not fully appreciated under the Liberals. The centrist side of the current government is indeed undermining intergovernmental relations within the Canadian federation. I should know, since I am the critic for federal-provincial relations.

However, Quebec is not the only province to have a bumpy relationship with the Liberal government. Abandoning the Canadian Multiculturalism Act on that pretext would be unfair to all Quebeckers. Having toured the province over the past few months, I can safely say that that is not what the people of Quebec want right now. They do not want division, and they certainly do not want exclusion. What Quebeckers really want is a strong voice in Ottawa, through measures like this act.

Quebeckers deserve recognition far beyond the provincial border. That is exactly what they will get, starting in the fall of 2019, with a new Conservative government.

● (1845)

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have the opportunity to speak to the bill before us today.

Before I discuss the contents of the bill, I would like to put on the record the incredible work my colleagues in the NDP's Quebec caucus are doing day in and day out to ensure the issues that matter most to their constituents are being championed in this place.

The member for Trois-Rivières has been fighting tirelessly for years on behalf of pyrrhotite victims who have been left in a grey zone by the Liberal government's idleness.

The member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie has been leading the charge in the House against the use of tax havens for the wealthiest and the government's inaction on this file.

The member for Hochelaga has been a ferocious advocate for social housing, despite the Liberals' refusal to actually deliver.

The member for Berthier—Maskinongé, more than anyone in this place, has been standing up for dairy farmers, not just in Quebec but across the country, fighting to ensure the Liberal government does not go through with the concessions on supply management in trade deals.

The member for Drummond is the best defender of bilingualism and the French language in the House. Acadians, Franco-Ontarians and other minority language communities know all too well that the Liberal government is not paying attention to their concerns.

The member for Salaberry—Suroît has been a champion for clean water in her riding by working to get the *Kathryn Spirit* dismantled, and has continued to point out the government's failure to recognize the dangers of the 9B Line pipeline crossing her community.

The member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert every day does more than even the minister of heritage to protect Quebec's culture from web giants.

The member for Jonquière every day in this place stands up for softwood lumber, paper mill and aluminum workers of Saguenay—Lac Saint-Jean, the very ones the government is putting in the line of fire in trade negotiations.

Finally, the member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot provides a voice to workers in the House who face an EI black hole, forsaken by Liberal and Conservative governments, which shamefully refuse to fix these gaps.

It is with a bit of irony that I, the member for North Island—Powell River in British Columbia, happen to be the one raising these issues today in this debate. One would have thought the Bloc would have used its opportunity to table and debate a bill in the House to discuss any of those important issues. Instead, we are talking about divisive, useless legislation. If this is the best the Bloc has to offer Quebeckers, frankly, it is a little more than sad. However, one thing is clear today. The one Quebec caucus standing up for Quebeckers in the House is the NDP Quebec caucus.

The bill before us today is a solution in search of a problem. Canadian multiculturalism is not a zero-sum game. Respect, protection and promotion of one culture will not diminish the standing of another culture. Instead, it creates a space for newcomer communities to integrate into, in the context of the bill, Quebec society specifically, without giving up who they are. This allows people to embrace and participate in Quebec's unique culture and heritage, without fearing they must give up their identity. They can instead have the opportunity to add Quebecker to who they are. This should be encouraged, not denigrated.

Unfortunately, this approach is not new for the Bloc Québécois. It has tried this before. In 2008, a Bloc MP tabled Bill C-505, a nearly identical bill. The former leader of the NDP, himself a proud Quebecker, the former member for Outremont, Mr. Tom Mulcair, stated quite clearly what the bill truly was: An attempt to divide Quebec from the rest of Canada and an attempt to divide Quebeckers against Quebeckers. He stated:

> We must recall what section 27 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms says, because it gives us an indication of why we must oppose this bill, "This Charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians."

● (1850)

He went on to say:

> What the Bloc is trying to do with this bill is to alter the Canadian Multiculturalism Act to do something separate for Quebec. It would be easy to follow them down that road, if the goal were to stay in Canada. But let us not delude ourselves. The Bloc Québécois, as is its absolute right in this democracy, has as its ultimate priority the removal of Quebec from Canada. We must therefore realize that the only purpose of the bill must be to position the Bloc in a debate that has been raging in Quebec for the last year and a half. So the goal is not to improve how things work in Canada....

Or, I would add, even in Quebec. Instead, it is a blatant attempt to fan the flames of anti-immigration and anti-refugee rhetoric and provide, in addition to the Conservative Party, another voice for that in this place.

This bill ignores the existence of the Cullen-Couture agreement of 1978, which provides Quebec significant authority and policy-making abilities within the realm of immigration. That agreement allows Quebec to develop its own points system for the selection of immigrants. Thus, while the systems are quite similar, Quebec's points system provides more points for French language skills and more points for adaptability. It also provides points for having relatives established in Quebec, for spouses with French language skills and for having a young family. Among other things, that agreement aimed to respect and strengthen the enrichment of Canada's cultural and social heritage, taking into account the federal and bilingual character of Canada. It also acknowledges that foreign nationals in Quebec should contribute to Quebec's social and cultural enrichment, taking into account its specifically French character.

The bill before us, strangely, also ignores the actual Canadian Multiculturalism Act itself, most importantly, subsection 5(2), which reads:

> The Minister may enter into an agreement or arrangement with any province respecting the implementation of the multiculturalism policy of Canada.

This means that should the Province of Quebec feel that the current policy being implemented is not achieving the greatest benefit, it can work with the minister to improve the policy's implementation. This is what occurred with the Cullen-Couture agreement. It is truly a shame that the member chose to table this bill of all things rather than using this incredible opportunity to table a bill in the House of Commons that would help impact and shape our country and help promote Quebec culture and heritage.

As I stated at the outset, my NDP Quebec colleagues are working tirelessly on issues of importance to the people of Quebec. The NDP recognizes the national character of Quebec, based on a society that has French as its language of work and the common language of the public domain; a unique culture expressed through a sense of identity and belonging to Quebec; a specific history; and political, economic, cultural and social institutions of its own. Had the member brought forward a bill that strengthened any of those aspect for Quebec, he might have found our support.

● (1855)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rémi Massé (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I want to talk about private member's Bill C-393, which was introduced by the member for Montcalm. The bill seeks the support of the House to amend the Canadian Multiculturalism Act so that it would not apply in Quebec.

Diversity is a fundamental and enduring feature of Quebec and Canada. Our society is made up of individuals from different cultures all over the world who have learned over time to respect and accept one another. Canada was the first country in the world to adopt multiculturalism as an official policy in 1971. In 1988, the Canadian Multiculturalism Act affirmed that multiculturalism is a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society. Multiculturalism strengthens Quebec and Canada by fostering an inclusive society in which people of all backgrounds are respected and recognized.

Multiculturalism may be one of the government's official policies, but it is also a concept that is expressly included in and part of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Section 27 states:

> This Charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians.

In a society as diverse as ours, our multiculturalism policy helps preserve our values and the principles of inclusion and diversity. This policy also makes it possible for Quebeckers and Canadians of all backgrounds to make social, economic, cultural and political contributions to our society. It is clear to me that the laws, initiatives and programs that eliminate racism and discrimination support full participation and ensure that institutions reflect the diversity of the people they serve.

Furthermore, these laws, initiatives and programs are essential to creating a more inclusive and respectful society where every person, no matter their ethnic origin, colour or religion, helps build a more just society. The Canadian Multiculturalism Act seeks to build a society where multiculturalism and respect for diversity are fundamental characteristics and values.

This does not mean that differences cannot lead to tensions between individuals, but as we learn to manage these tensions, Quebeckers and Canadians learn to adapt and develop relationships in spite of their differences. We have come to understand that our differences do not have to divide us.

Canada's federal multiculturalism policy and Quebec's interculturalism model have complemented each other and coexisted since the 1970s without causing tension or creating serious problems. Although interculturalism is a provincial model of integration in Quebec, multiculturalism is Canada's federal integration model, as set out in the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, 1988.

There are differences between these two approaches, but the federal multiculturalism system is flexible enough to allow these two approaches to coexist. The approaches put more emphasis on integration and respect for shared civic and democratic values, and as such, both approaches have been contributing to Canada's social fabric since the 1970s.

Quebec and Canada are proof that it is possible for men and women from diverse backgrounds, religions and cultures to live together. We admit that there are problems, and we are working to find solutions, despite our differences. We are showing the world that different people can accept each other, respect each other, and work together to build one of the most open, resilient and creative societies on Earth.

Canadian Heritage's multiculturalism program offers programs and services in support of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act's implementation.

● (1900)

The objectives of the program are to: build an integrated, socially cohesive society; improve the responsiveness of institutions to the needs of a diverse population; and actively engage in discussions on multiculturalism and diversity at the international level.

To that end, the program includes four key areas of activity: grants and contributions; public outreach and promotion; support to federal and public institutions; and international engagement.

It is important for us to continue working together to achieve common objectives for building a strong and inclusive society.

Over the past four decades, multiculturalism has become central to the way Canadians view themselves and their country. They feel that multiculturalism is not only key to their national identity, but a source of pride. We increasingly see our country as being richer for its diversity.

Debates on multiculturalism are necessary ingredients in a democratic society. These are the debates that helped develop Canada's approach to multiculturalism and diversity. In the 1970s, debates were focused on celebrating our differences. In the 1980s, the focus was on managing diversity and now, in 2018, multiculturalism is focused on social inclusion.

The wording of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act is general enough to include new approaches to promoting the act's objectives.

Canadians are proud of their diversity. According to a Statistics Canada study released in 2015, 85% of Canadians believe that ethnic and cultural diversity is a value that Canadians share.

Ultimately, what matters is not what we call our policy framework. What matters is creating a climate that fosters appreciation for the multicultural heritage of all Canadians, who have roots all over the world. It is also important that we create a public space in which everyone can express their confidence and their sense of attachment and belonging to our society, its people and its institutions.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to distinguish between "diversity", which is a state of affairs, and "multiculturalism", which is a political choice. My colleagues from other parties do not seem to see the difference.

People can be against multiculturalism without being against diversity. We are not at all against diversity, but we are against this policy.

Some of the eminent academics who have examined the matter, including some in English Canada, say that multiculturalism can work. Others say it does not. However, it only ever works in one context: English Canada. It works when one's culture is dominant and one can be fairly certain that everyone else will be integrated eventually.

Those academics, those intellectuals, all say that this kind of policy will never work for a minority nation. My people, the Quebec nation, we are a minority. Imposing multiculturalism on a minority nation does not work. That has been our experience. That is not how we integrate people. Academics agree that it will not work.

It is often said that multiculturalism is a beautiful mosaic, but what is a mosaic? If people look closely, they will see small stones surrounded by cement. Creating small cement barriers between people is not an approach that works for us. What we want is for the cultures to integrate and for people to live in harmony, not just tolerate each other. We have a lot to learn from newcomers from every culture, from the people from different cultural communities who come to live among us. We do not just want to tolerate each other and live side by side separated by small cement barriers. We believe in integration. That is all that my colleague is proposing.

When I spoke about intellectuals from English Canada, I was thinking, for example, of Will Kymlicka, Evelyn Kallen and Vince Seymour Wilson, those great thinkers of Canadian multiculturalism.

According to them, multiculturalism can be a good policy for English Canada. They say that organic integration must be done by the so-called dominant society or majority, not by a minority nation.

All of these great thinkers agree that things are different in Quebec. Canada's multiculturalism cannot be transposed on Quebec.

That is all that my colleague said, but what contempt from some colleagues in the other parties. They are saying that Quebec does not want diversity, but this is not the case. There is a lot of confusion.

Quebec does not believe that multiculturalism is necessary to integrate diversity. There is a lot of confusion here, and everything is being mixed up.

Evelyn Kallen, a professor at York University in Toronto, sorts it all out in her book entitled *Multiculturalism: Ideology, Policy and Reality*. In it, she says that diversity is a reality, a state of affairs. Liking or disliking diversity is a feeling. As she points out, multiculturalism is one policy among many others. Nothing more. This policy may be appropriate in some places, perhaps more so in English Canada. I will leave that up to my colleagues to decide. I am not part of English Canada, so it is not up to me to debate it. That is up to them, but Quebec should be able to deal with its own affairs; we should not have decisions made for us.

Quebec is a diverse society, a welcoming society, a pluralistic society. We are not all alike in Quebec, and that is just fine. I believe that it is not enough to simply tolerate difference; one must love it. Difference challenges me, it makes me question things and forces me to evolve. It enriches me and makes me a better person, which I like. Interaction is needed for that to happen. For interaction to take place, we need a minimum of shared values on which we agree well enough that we can understand one another when we talk. This means we need a language we all understand, a common language. That is how we will interact, and mix and blend together. In Quebec we often say that we are a tight-knit bunch, but Boucar Diouf came up with the expression that Quebeckers like so much, "se métisser serré", basically saying we are a tightly-knit diverse nation. That is how we like it, and that is how we will be able to live together, and not just side by side. That is how we are going to build the Quebec I love so much.

We must work together to pursue this great adventure of building an original society on this North American land. To achieve that, we, as Quebeckers, must be the ones to decide how we will interact with one another and how we will manage our differences in order to live together harmoniously.

● (1905)

The bill introduced by my esteemed colleague from Montcalm is simply intended to allow that. Nothing else.

The rest of Canada is the majority society. Not only that, but English Canadian culture, spread through the English language, is part of the dominant global culture. The same cannot be said of Quebec culture. I would like to quote from page 19 of the Bouchard-Taylor commission's report:

> ...the Canadian multiculturalism model does not appear to be well adapted to conditions in Québec.
>
> Generally speaking, it is in the interests of any community to maintain a minimum of cohesion. It is subject to that condition that a community can adopt common orientations, ensure participation by citizens in public debate, create the feeling of solidarity required for an egalitarian society to function smoothly, mobilize the population in the event of a crisis, and take advantage of the enrichment that stems from ethnocultural diversity. For a small nation such as Québec, constantly concerned about its future as a cultural minority, integration also represents a condition for its development, or perhaps for its survival.

I think these few sentences say it all. I will repeat the last part of the sentence about Quebec, because I think it captures the issue perfectly: integration also represents a condition for its development, or perhaps for its survival.

Canada has chosen multiculturalism. That is its right. Canada is gambling on the idea that integration into the dominant society will naturally occur in the globally dominant language and culture. That may work, but Canada has no right to impose this model on Quebec, a minority nation.

The Canadian mosaic, as it is called, is not suitable for Quebec. As I have said, I am a Quebecker. I would not ask Canadians to become Quebeckers, nor would I ask Canada to change its diversity management policy to something that would suit Quebec better. That is not what we are asking for. All I want is for Canada to show the same respect for Quebec's choices.

● (1910)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Joliette will have two and a half minutes remaining when the House resumes debate on this motion.

The time provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a question I originally asked the Minister of National Defence back on April 26 about a situation that had occurred on April 20. I will give the House some background.

It was brought to my attention that Colonel Jay Janzen, who is the Canadian Forces director of strategic communications, had taken to Twitter and had decided to criticize the media and us as politicians for raising questions at committee and in the media about the UN mission to Mali. At that point in time, very little was known about the mission, very little was in the news and very little was being said by the Minister of National Defence.

For months we called for a fulsome debate here in the House on the mission to Mali before we deployed our troops. That never happened. The Liberal government continues to stonewall the official opposition and Canadians about providing all the details about what Canadians are doing in the mission in Mali.

What was insulting in the Twitter exchange between Colonel Janzen and I, and other people who were engaged, is that essentially what I saw was disrespect towards parliamentarians and our right to ask the hard questions, to raise issues and to ask about what Canadians need to hear about what the government is doing and how it is using the Canadian Armed Forces.

This comes back to the fact that after the Liberals formed government in 2015, they developed a policy called the weaponization of the Canadian Armed Forces public affairs division. That was actually reported in Defence Watch in 2015. We have had a change in policy.

The director of strategic communications, or public affairs, of the Canadian Armed Forces is meant to be there to help inform Canadians and to help explain what the Canadian Armed Forces is up to, whether it is the mission in Mali, whether it is training here at home, whether it is recruiting or whether it is deploying to other missions around the world. That is its role. They can talk about some of the equipment we are buying and what they are doing with that equipment.

Those are the interesting discussions Canadians are looking for. They want to make sure that they are engaged at that level, but to have a Twitter war appear is something I am concerned about, and others are as well.

As I said to the colonel in one of my tweets back:

> Do you have a problem with #transparency, civilian oversight or both? It is arrogant and insulting to diminish the legitimate questions of Parliamentarians and Canadians. We have the right to know how [the Prime Minister] is using our #Canadian Forces to get #UN SecurityCouncilseat.

An explanation was given by Colonel Janzen about the terminology being used properly. I accept that explanation, but the discourse between the armed forces and us as parliamentarians needs to be respectful and ensure that information is being shared and that nobody feels diminished in asking those hard questions.

● (1915)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cormier (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague across the way for his question. I am certainly looking forward to working with him on the Standing Committee on National Defence.

Tonight is my first adjournment debate.

As we know, our government made a commitment to provide Canadians with accurate information in a transparent and timely manner. The government's communications staff are at the forefront of these efforts.

The Department of National Defence has civilian and military communication professionals working at its headquarters, across Canada and abroad. These Canadians from diverse backgrounds work diligently to inform the public about what our defence team is doing in Canada and abroad. Every day, they provide communication services and advice to support our government's defence priorities, which we outlined for Canadians in our defence policy, "Strong, Secure, Engaged".

Their support is part of what makes it possible to hold technical briefings to keep journalists and parliamentarians abreast of our defence team's ongoing efforts to protect Canada, keep North America safe, and pursue our engagement in the world. Take, for example, the information sessions on the deployment of our women and men in uniform to Mali, or the announcement of our defence capability program.

Similarly, our communications experts manage the National Defence lines of communication, particularly on the Internet and on social media. Our government takes this responsibility very seriously, since we are committed to encouraging Canadians to participate through every possible means in order to gather many different perspectives and new ideas.

In that regard, our efforts in the creation and publication of our "Strong, Secure, Engaged" policy are a prime example of the most comprehensive public consultation on Canada's defence policy in the past 20 years. Throughout the consultation period, Canadians representing various walks of life and different backgrounds submitted more than 20,000 documents and ideas through the public consultation portal. Over 4,700 participants gave feedback and voted using the online discussion forum. Nine round tables with over 100 experts were held across the country, including special events dealing with the industy, gender and indigenous issues. Lastly, more than 50 parliamentarians organized community consultation activities. The knowledge and ideas shared by Canadians were carefully considered, and Canada's defence policy is based on what we heard.

Our civilian and military communications experts also play an important role in the implementation of strategic marketing and advertising, including recruitment campaigns. These campaigns are essential to attracting the brightest and the best Canadian candidates and encouraging them to consider a career in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Our government also understands that diversity is our strength and a key factor in the success of our missions. That is why the Canadian Armed Forces welcomes candidates of any gender, religion, ethnicity and sexual orientation. We will continue to build a defence team that reflects the Canadian ideals of diversity, respect and inclusion.

We understand that the Canadian Armed Forces must reflect Canadian society and remain an employer of choice for all Canadians. That is exactly why we are engaged in dialogue with Canadians through various means, including social media. Our objective is to inspire and educate young Canadians and to pique their interest by presenting a variety of opportunities and military careers.

Thanks to these efforts, we are pleased to present the army as an employer of choice and, in particular, to attract women and Canadians of diverse origins. The Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces are committed to managing and improving defence communications, and we are proud of the efforts made in that regard by our entire team.

In closing, I would like to remind my colleague that we proposed a take-note debate on the Mali mission. I would like to suggest to my colleague opposite that he speak to his House leader about what he said in his speech.

● (1920)

[*English*]

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence into his new job. He is the third one in three years I have had to deal with.

It is inappropriate and inexcusable that the Prime Minister weaponized the public affairs division of the Canadian Armed Forces. The public affairs division is meant to inform Canadians on the work performed by our men and women in uniform. It should not be used to attack journalists and members of Parliament who raise legitimate questions regarding the government's defence priorities.

It should be clear to anyone that the public affairs division of the Canadian Armed Forces is not a wing of the Prime Minister's Office. This follows an alarming trend of the Prime Minister's willingness to use the Canadian Armed Forces as a political pawn for partisan gain. The purpose of the Canadian Armed Forces is to defend Canadians at home and abroad and not to aid in the Prime Minister's re-election campaign.

By weaponizing the public affairs branch of the Canadian Armed Forces, the Liberal government is failing to respect the non-partisan values of our military. As with the Mali peacekeeping deployment, this is yet another example of how the Prime Minister has broken his promise to run an open and transparent government. I expect better and I ask the parliamentary secretary and the Minister of National Defence to change course.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cormier: Mr. Speaker, as I said before, the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces are an organization made up of many communications specialists working throughout Canada and the world. I can assure the House that they are committed to providing valuable advice and services, as well as quality support for our government's defence priorities. However, the Harper government made cuts for decades.

My colleague referred to the fact that I am the third parliamentary secretary to the Minister of National Defence in three years, but he too once held this position. When he was the parliamentary secretary, the Conservatives cut billions and billions of dollars from the defence budget. I came into this position at a time when our government is investing billions of dollars in defence, so I do not think I need any lessons from him on how to manage the government's budget.

In closing, I would like to say a special thank you to all the men and women, particularly the staff at the Department of National Defence and our communications specialists, who work extremely hard each day to ensure that Canadians know what the Department of National Defence is doing and are aware of just how much we have achieved to date.

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise here this evening to follow up on a question I asked the Prime Minister back in April of this year on the subject of illegal border crossers.

For nearly two years, the Conservatives have been asking the Prime Minister and his Liberal government to take action to address the influx of illegal migrants. It is profoundly disappointing that instead of putting forward a plan to resolve the problem, the Liberals have allowed a trickle of illegal crossings to grow into a stream and to now grow into a flood. Because of their inaction, a minor problem that could have been addressed early on has become a crisis. Do not take my word for it. Recent polls have indicated that two-thirds of Canadians consider this situation of illegal migrants a crisis.

When I realized that Canada was experiencing a concerning increase in the influx of illegal border crossings at the beginning of 2017, nearly two years ago, I called on the Liberal government to take swift action. Instead what we got was tweets from the Prime Minister saying, "Welcome to Canada" and "Regardless of who you are or where you come from, there's always a place for you in Canada." Here we are, 19 months later, and it is clear that the Liberals are either unwilling or unable to fix this mess of their own making.

We are not just talking about some abstract concept here, we are talking about the lives of real people. Under the current Prime Minister, large numbers of refugees are not receiving the support they need to successfully integrate into the Canadian economic and social fabric.

In addition to that, asylum seekers are facing backlogs that are years long to have their asylum claims heard. In the meantime, they are being housed in hotels or moved from shelter to shelter, drawing welfare payments and struggling to access language training services. All of this is costing taxpayers excessive amounts of money, yet it is not delivering the desired results.

Furthermore, the Prime Minister has normalized the policy of allowing people to use Canada's asylum system as a means to immigrate to Canada for economic reasons. Asylum is for those who are facing violence, persecution and war. When we treat economic migrants as refugees, resources that ought to be reserved for those in dire need are instead redirected to individuals who were already safe. This is not compassionate. In fact, it is downright unfair to those who are languishing in refugee camps around the world waiting for their chance to come to Canada, for their chance to be free from war, persecution and violence.

We recently learned that more than 65% of illegal migrants from 2017 to 2018 had legal status in the United States prior to illegally entering Canada. Despite the border security minister's false claims over the weekend that the "overwhelming majority of those people have left", we know that only six of 900 illegal migrants under U.S. deportation orders have been removed. Though he later retracted it, it is concerning that the minister appears to be unaware of just how bad the situation actually is. Since early 2017, more than 34,000 illegal migrants have entered Canada. Only about 400, about 1%, have been removed. These are facts the minister should know well. I will go a step further there. These are facts that should have led the Liberal government to develop and implement a plan to address this crisis a long time ago.

I continue to await an answer from the Liberal government. Will it put a stop to illegal border crossings? Will it restore order and fairness to our immigration and refugee system? Will it defend the integrity of our borders? Will it stand up for the thousands of vulnerable individuals who want to come to Canada the right way?

● (1925)

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Youth) and to the Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the hon. member for Provencher's question today. I am happy to note that since he presented his question, he has had a productive discussion with the Minister of Border Security to acknowledge significant improvements on the issue following our government's significant initiatives and outreach.

[*Translation*]

As we all know, in the past two years, we have seen an increase in the number of claims made both by asylum seekers crossing at points of entry and by asylum seekers irregularly crossing the border between two points of entry.

I would first like to debunk the myth that asylum seekers are jumping the line and that their arrival in Canada delays the processing of other immigration applications.

[*English*]

Asylum claimants are not taking the place of refugees who are coming to Canada in resettlement programs and they are not taking the place of people waiting in other immigration streams. For that party to continue to suggest so is irresponsible and outright dangerous.

[*Translation*]

The reality is that dedicated, impartial staff at the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada make decisions about asylum seekers. These decisions are based on the facts presented in each case. They are consistent with the principles of natural justice and ensure that the procedures are fair. Decisions are based on the merits of each case.

[*English*]

This process does not impact Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's ability to make decisions on other types of applications. Accordingly, Canada has a multi-year immigration levels plan that sets out how many immigrants Canada will welcome in family and economic streams.

[*Translation*]

I repeat: asylum seekers are not taking places reserved for family or economic immigration.

[*English*]

Further, I want to clarify that claimants do receive—and this goes to the assertions my colleague made about how we are not preparing them when they are here and not providing them with support when they are here—interim health care and work permits while waiting for their claims to be decided. This may contribute to the mistaken impression that we are providing expedited work permits as part of queue jumping. However, the reality is very much to the contrary. This is a process that helps claimants lead an independent life in Canada while they wait for their claims to be heard, rather than forcing them to rely on provincial social assistance.

Knowing that this is the case, I hope that the members of the party opposite will finally cease their baseless claims. The government is committed to working with provinces and municipalities to deal with the challenges of migration, including irregular migration. These are challenges that we are addressing.

[*Translation*]

I must point out that, although there were fewer migrants at the border this summer compared to the same period last year, we remain vigilant and are prepared to take action should this situation change.

● (1930)

[*English*]

In short, our plan is working and since last August there has been a 70% reduction in the number of asylum seekers and the processing of claims has increased over that time by 50%.

Mr. Ted Falk: Mr. Speaker, I take issue with some of the parliamentary secretary's comments. He made the assertion that resources are not being redeployed to deal with illegal migrants and thereby slowing down processing the claims for legitimate refugees applying to come to our country.

What is really problematic in this whole situation is that the Prime Minister has no plan. Perhaps most concerning is that he is not willing to even receive criticism around this issue. He refuses to answer questions in the House about his failure, except I may note that in April, when I asked him to confirm whether crossings between legal points of entry were illegal, he actually did confirm to the House and Canadians that yes, that was illegal crossing. Even though many of the members in his caucus prefer to keep calling it irregular, the Prime Minister did confirm in his answer to me that indeed these crossings are illegal.

I would like to reiterate that what we need from the Liberal government is a plan to deal with the influx of illegal migrants.

Mr. Peter Schiefke: Mr. Speaker, to my colleague's first point, he knows full well, because he has been here for awhile, that it is illegal for those people to come over the border until such time as they ask for asylum. Then they become part of the process that we provide to asylum seekers.

To the point that we do not have a plan, my hon. colleague knows full well that we have a robust six-point plan. The priorities are to keep Canadians safe, a priority that I think we all share as members of the House; to ensure that we have a process in place that looks at every case individually in a manner that is just, fair and efficient; and that we apply all of the rules and abide by our international obligations. My hon. colleague also knows that we have been doing just that. In addition to that, we have invested $173 million in the short term to provide more resources on the ground to help deal with this unprecedented influx of asylum seekers in Canada.

I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his question, as it is always great to discuss issues with him. I look forward to future discussions.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the topic I am discussing tonight comes from a question I asked in the House back in April. The question was essentially, how can the government square its approval of the Trans Mountain pipeline with Canada's Paris climate action commitments? I asked this question then because I hear it almost every day from my constituents. We hear a lot in this place about pipelines and concerns about consultation with first nations and concerns about the impacts on the marine environment. Those are important issues. Those, in fact, are the issues the Federal Court of Appeal raised when it recently quashed the Trans Mountain expansion approval.

However, the question of how a government that claims to be a world leader in climate action can approve a pipeline whose only purpose is to expand oil sands production is troubling. This question was raised by the government's own ministerial panel that toured the pipeline route before the government gave the project approval. This was one of the six questions the panel said should have been answered before the pipeline decision was made. Now we have not only approved the pipeline, but have bought it.

How are we doing on our Paris targets? At Paris, we committed to reducing our greenhouse gas emissions by 30% below 2005 levels by 2030, which points to a target of just over 500 megatonnes of carbon dioxide. We are at about 700 megatonnes now, so we have quite a ways to go. To put that into perspective, we would have to take all passenger vehicles off Canadian roads to get halfway to that target, and lately our emissions have only been dropping by a few megatonnes per year.

A national price on carbon would get us part of the way there, and I commend the government for its commitment to that action. However, all of the government's announced policies will still leave us short. The Climate Action Tracker site, which covers the commitments of all countries that signed onto the Paris Agreement, classes Canada's climate action efforts as "highly insufficient". It is easy to feel that we are doing well when we live beside the U.S.A., which is listed as "critically insufficient", but we share our highly insufficient grade with some countries whose carbon footprints many people like to criticize, such as China's. Most of the developed world —Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Brazil and Mexico—rank well above us. Also, one of the countries I often hear held up as a problem on the world climate action scene, India, is actually leading the pack with its policies and accomplishments.

With planned policies, Canadian emissions are projected to reach 569 megatonnes by 2030. To get below that, I hear rumours that Canada will try to change the rules and move the goalposts by relying on carbon sinks in our forests and land-use policies, without reference to the levels those sources were providing before our Paris commitment.

The Climate Action Tracker site adds that there is no clarity as to how many international credits Canada plans to use to meet its target. The use of international carbon credits implies that a portion of Canada's emissions reductions will not be met by domestic mitigation efforts. Here I would add that there is no indication that the international community will recognize international carbon credits for any country trying to meet its Paris commitments.

After I first raised this question last spring, the Canadian government doubled down on Trans Mountain and bought the project for $4.5 billion. We are spending our money subsidizing the fossil fuel industry. We are going in the wrong direction.

● (1935)

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister (Youth) and to the Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can think of no better way to conclude the sitting of today other than to stand up in this chamber and discuss the work that our government is doing in order to protect our environment while still growing the economy, so that Canadians can enjoy their quality of life while protecting it for the next generation.

I would like to first start off by thanking my hon. colleague for his question. I know that it comes from a good place. I share his concerns about environmental protection. I spent a good 10 years of my life working in the environmental field, particularly on the issue of climate change as the director of former vice-president Al Gore's climate change awareness foundation. This is an issue that is close to me personally as well. It is an honour for me to discuss this matter with him.

I know that his province is suffering the devastating effects of climate change and has been for some time, while wildfires are raging on. An increased risk of forest fires, as he knows full well, and I agree with him, is but one example of the impacts it is having on our communities, another being the tornado that just devastated the national capital region here in Ottawa and Gatineau.

We know our communities must become more resilient, not only for what lies ahead but for the changes we are currently seeing in our climate. To this end, I am proud to say that our government is taking leadership on climate action at home and abroad. We are taking concrete steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, support clean growth and build climate-resilient infrastructure.

We were among the first countries to sign and ratify the Paris Agreement. I am happy to reassure the member that we are following through on our Paris commitments, by implementing a national plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30% below 2005 levels by 2030 and build resilience to the impacts of climate change within our community.

We have a climate change plan. The pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change has been designed to meet or exceed the Paris Agreement targets. Our plan is the first climate change plan in Canada's history to include collective and individual commitments by federal, provincial and territorial governments, and to be developed through engagement with national representatives of first nations, Inuit and the Métis nation, the general public, non-governmental organizations as well as businesses.

Our plan has more than 50 concrete measures, including a pan-Canadian approach to pricing carbon pollution, as well as new policies, programs and regulations to reduce emissions in every sector of the economy, build resilience to the impacts of climate change, foster clean growth technology solutions and create good jobs that contribute to a strong economy at the same time.

The decision we took on the Trans Mountain expansion project was based on facts, science-based evidence and what is in our national interest. Our government approved the Trans Mountain expansion project following the most rigorous federal regulatory review and consultation on a major project in Canadian history.

We approved the project subject to 157 legally binding conditions to protect the environment and ensure that the project moves forward in the safest and most sustainable way. The Trans Mountain expansion project is consistent with the pan-Canadian framework as well as the Government of Alberta's very own emissions cap on the oil sands.

We have built a path for sustained indigenous engagement through the $64.7 million Indigenous Advisory and Monitoring Committee and are confident in the world-leading environmental standards, ocean and coastline protection under the $1.5 billion oceans protection plan.

We have taken an approach to resource development that will grow our economy and protect the environment from climate change, two of our government's main priorities, which are not mutually exclusive but are in fact complementary.

In short, we have covered a lot of ground since launching the pan-Canadian framework and we are starting to see results. When the policies and programs within the framework are fully implemented, our plan will not only allow Canada to meet its 2030 target in full, but it will also position us to set and achieve deeper reductions beyond 2030.

● (1940)

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the point is that I have seen no analysis out there that shows that we will meet those 2030 targets with the pan-Canadian framework. It will fall short.

After I asked this question last spring, I travelled to Argentina with the Minister of Natural Resources for the G20 energy meeting. The theme of that meeting was the grand transition to a low-carbon world. The Chinese minister talked of his country's bold action, moving directly from coal-fired plants to renewable energy. The U. K. minister talked of his country's three-point plan of action: legislated targets; significant investments in clean tech, including $2 billion in electric vehicle infrastructure alone; and a real plan to create good jobs in the clean energy sector. Our Canadian minister talked about buying a pipeline.

We can do better. We have to do better. I call on the government to abandon the Trans Mountain project and invest instead in a clean energy future.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Peter Schiefke: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to further discuss with my colleague the measures we are taking to reduce pollution.

I can reiterate that we are implementing a pan-Canadian framework on pricing carbon pollution. As of January 2019, a minimum price of $20 per tonne of carbon will be in effect across the country. That is just one of the measures we are taking to reduce our greenhouse gases and to meet our obligations under the Paris Agreement, which we signed a few years ago.

Again, I thank my hon. colleague. As I said, I look forward to continuing our discussion in person in the days and weeks ahead.

The Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:42 p.m.)

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